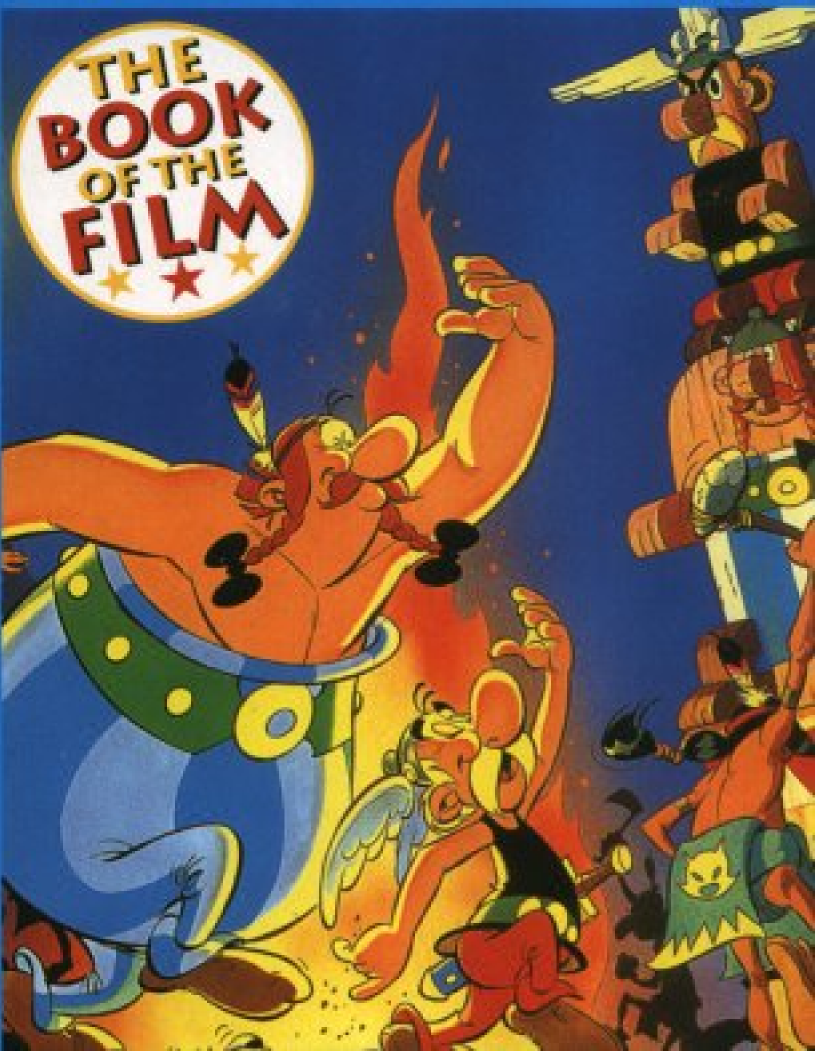
BOOK 34

GOSCINNY AND UDERZO

Asterix

ASTERIX CONQUERS AMERICA



GOSCINNY AND UDERZO PRESENT
AN ASTERIX ADVENTURE

Asterix

CONQUERS AMERICA

THE BOOK OF THE FILM

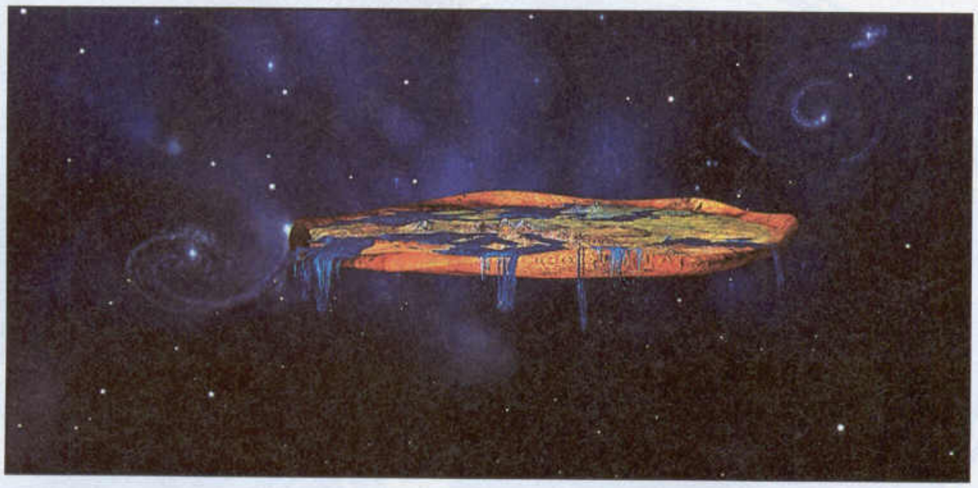
Translated by Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge



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The year is 50 BC. Gaul is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well, not entirely... One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders. And life is not easy for the Roman legionaries who garrison the fortified camps of Totorum, Aquarium, Laudanum and Compendium...

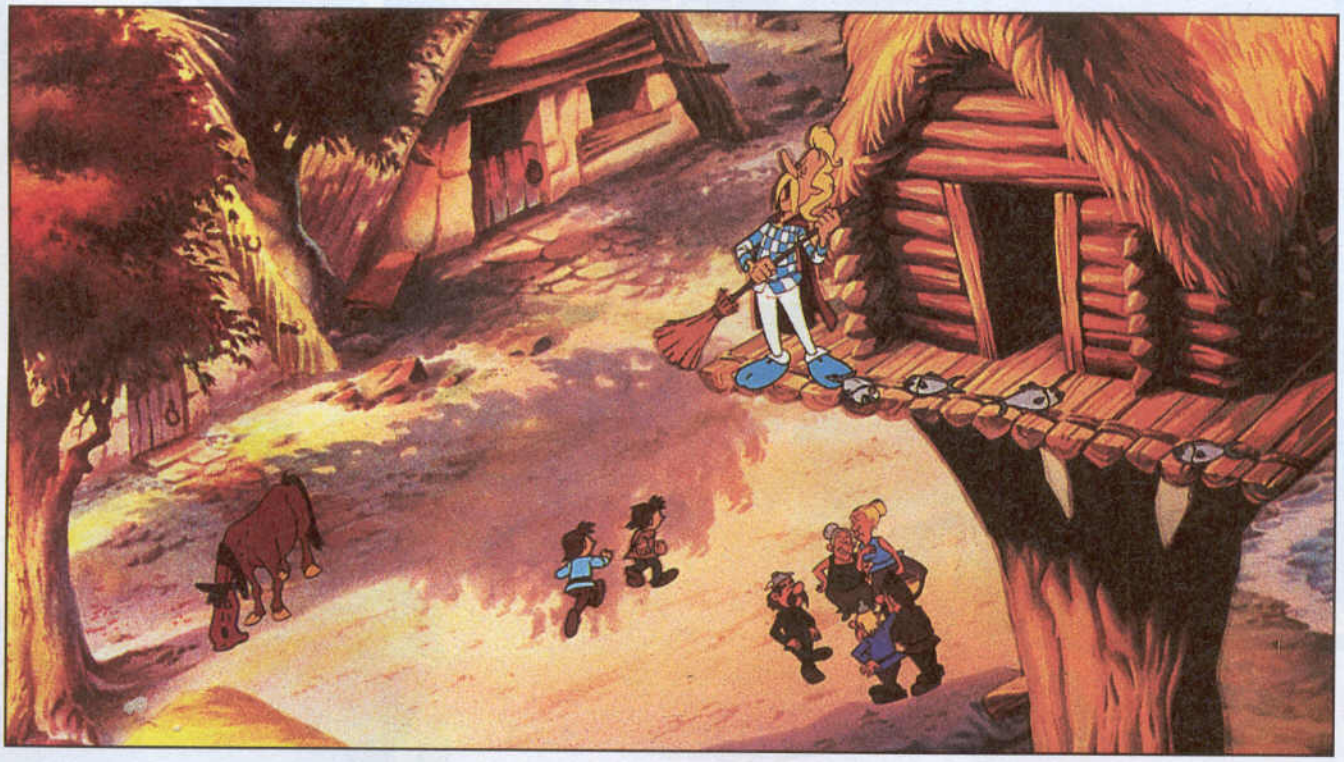


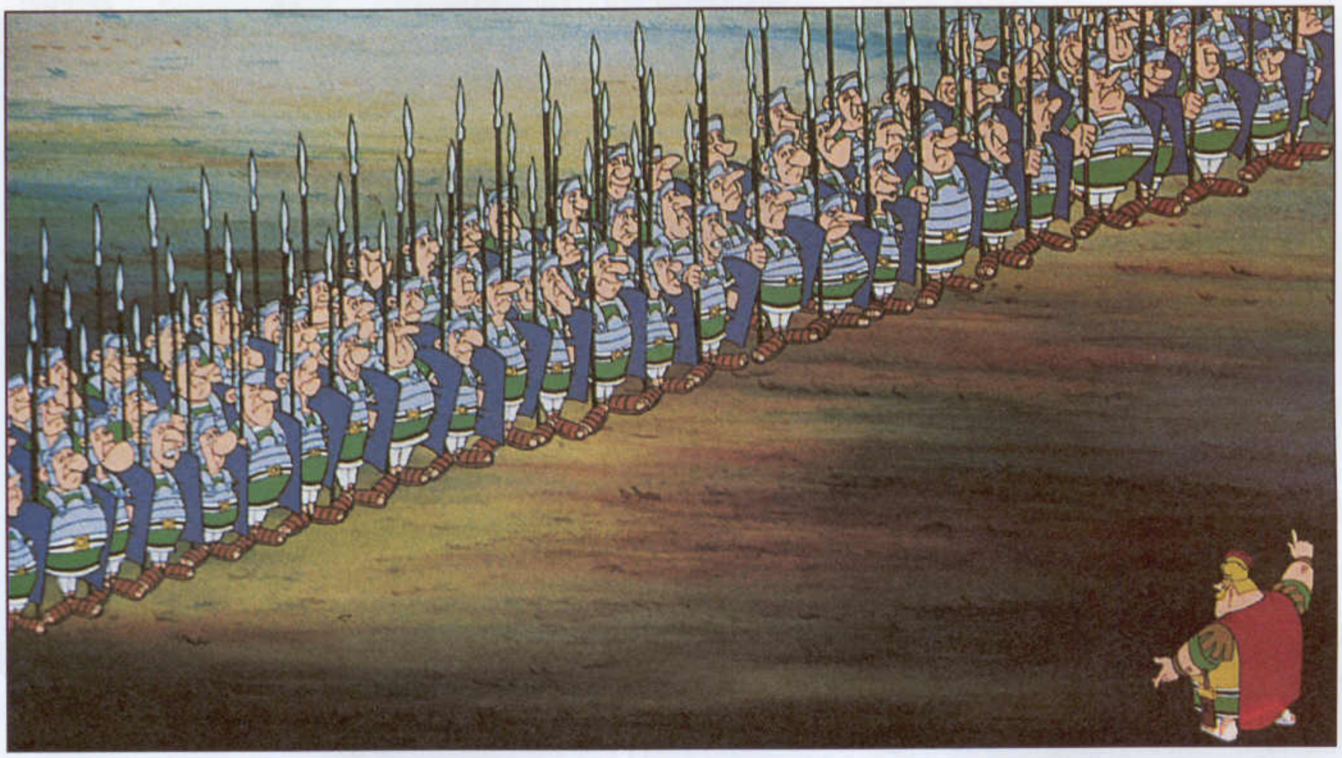
The year was 50 BC, a period of history when people thought the earth was as flat as a giant pancake hanging in the universe.

This was bad luck for any ships which rashly sailed too near the edge. They were bound to fall into the yawning gulf of infinite space. Or such was the popular belief, and no one had ever come back to contradict it.

Julius Caesar had conquered a large part of that pancake, making Rome the centre of the ancient world. The Romans had even conquered Gaul!

All Gaul? No! As everyone knows, one little village of indomitable Gauls was still holding out against the invader.

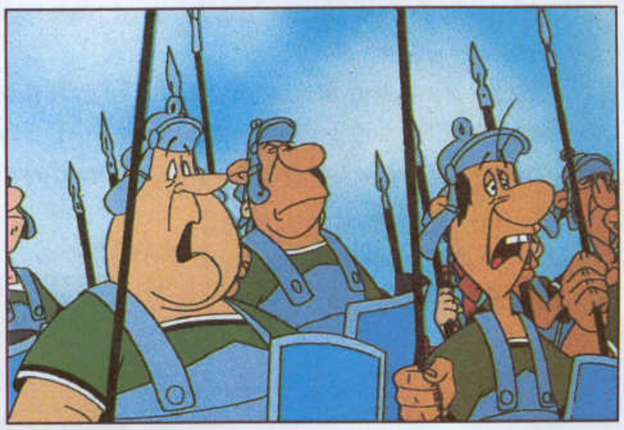




Exasperated, Caesar had sent yet another centurion to command the legionaries garrisoning one of the camps surrounding the Gaulish village. Minibus, for such was his name, was a stout and loud-mouthed character.

'Now then, legionaries! We must crush these barbarians who dare to defy the power of Rome. Caesar is very angry with them for rejecting the benefits of Roman civilization!'

Among the legionaries listening without much interest to their centurion, since he was new here and didn't know his way around, were two old veterans who didn't look at all sure of the necessity of acquainting the barbarians just over the road with the benefits of Roman civilization. They had obviously paid dearly for their experience.

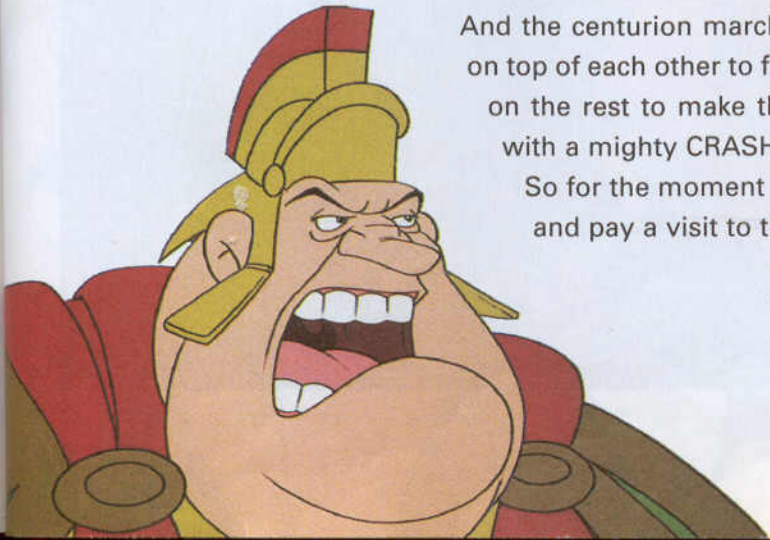


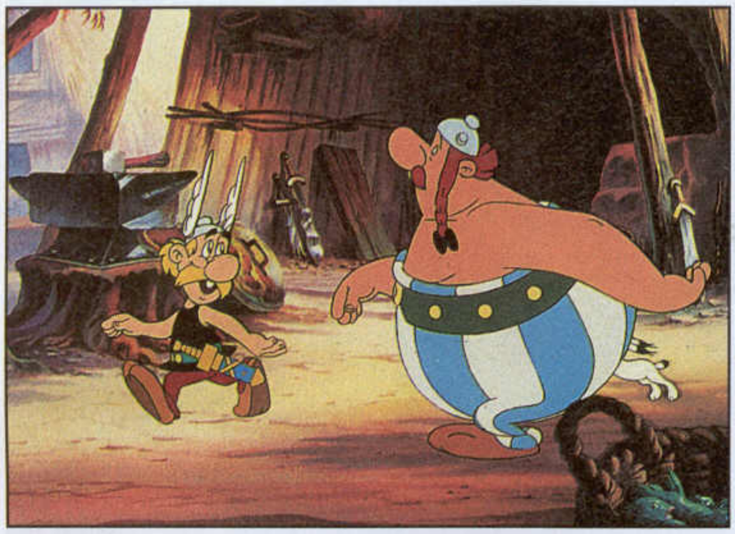
'Tell you what, Stupidus, anyone can see this new centurion is green as grass!'

'You said it, Corpulentus! But we're the ones who'll end up black and blue again!'

'SILENCE IN THE RANKS THERE! INTO A WEDGE FORMATION AND FORWARD MARCH!' And the centurion marched forward, failing to see the legionaries climb on top of each other to form a pyramid. One last soldier tried to climb up on the rest to make the tip of the pyramid, and everything collapsed with a mighty CRASH, BANG, WALLOP!

So for the moment let us leave Centurion Minibus about to explode, and pay a visit to the Gauls in the little village.





Here, all seems peace and calm. The Gauls are going about their normal business. In his hut, Getafix the druid is brewing magic potion for the umpteenth time. These days you never know...

Asterix had invited his friend Obelix and Dogmatix the little dog to eat a few roast wild boar. Obelix, who had just finished his, was about to grab another, but Asterix stopped him.

'Show a little self-control, Obelix! If you carry on eating like that you'll get fat!'

'Fat? Me? But I only eat one meal a day!'

'YES, AND IT GOES ON FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET!'

The two friends decided to go for a stroll in the village with Dogmatix, to help their dinner go down. They met Chief Vitalstatistix, being carried about on a shield as usual.

'How are you, O Chief Vitalstatistix?'

'Huh! I'd be fine but for these two fools carrying me. They can't see beyond their own toes!'

The shield-bearers immediately leaned forward to take a good look at their toes, tipping the tottering Vitalstatistix off. Indifferent and resigned, he stayed where he was, drumming his fingers irritably on the ground.

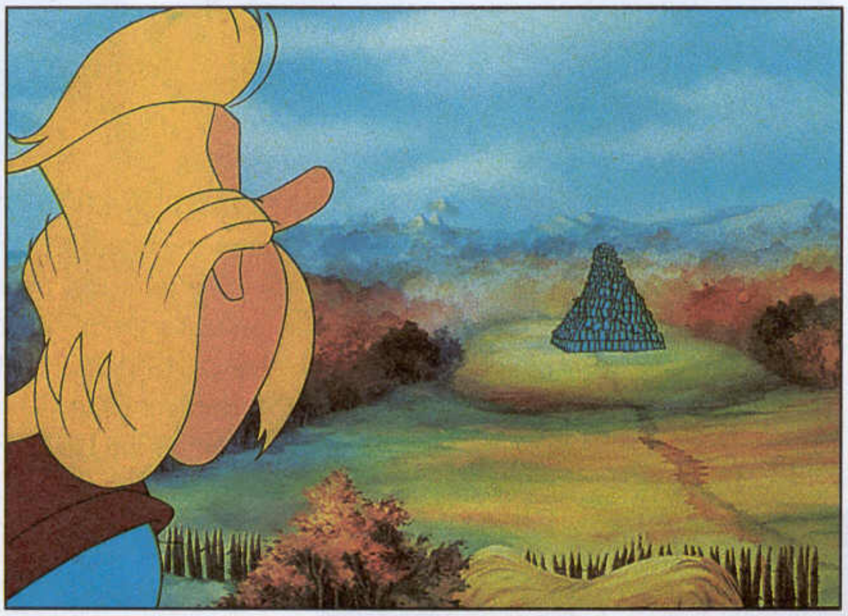
'Sometimes I wonder if I really do owe it to my position to be carried about by these halfwits!'

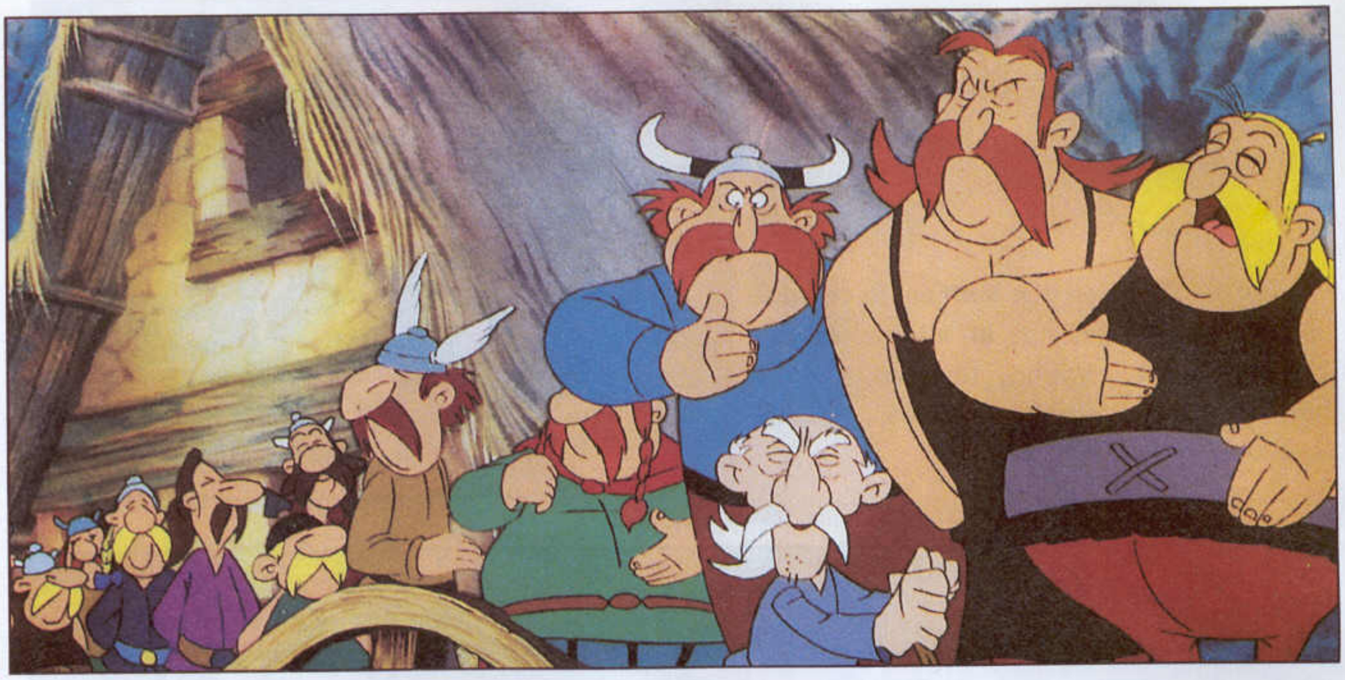
Meanwhile, up on the platform of his hut, Cacofonix the bard was carefully plucking the strings of his lyre.

'Stop clowning about there and watch the horizon to see what those Romans are up to!' shouted Vitalstatistix. The bard's feelings were hurt. He came over all dignified.

'How dare you interrupt me in my inspired composition to go on lookout duty! You're just... just...'

'ROMANS! THE ROMANS ARE COMING! THEY'RE MARCHING ON THE VILLAGE!'





The chief reacted swiftly.

'ASTERIX, GO AND TELL GETAFIX! I'll raise the alarm! Obelix, you make sure the village gate is properly shut!'

Obelix didn't really think that was necessary.

'Oh, why not leave it open? It would be more fun to thump the Romans here at home!'

Once the alarm had been raised, all the Gauls met in front of Getafix's house for a dose of magic potion. Asterix was one of the first in the queue, and the potion took instant effect on him. The rest followed, among them Obelix, who marched up with his greedy mouth open for a portion of potion. But as usual, the druid wasn't giving him any.

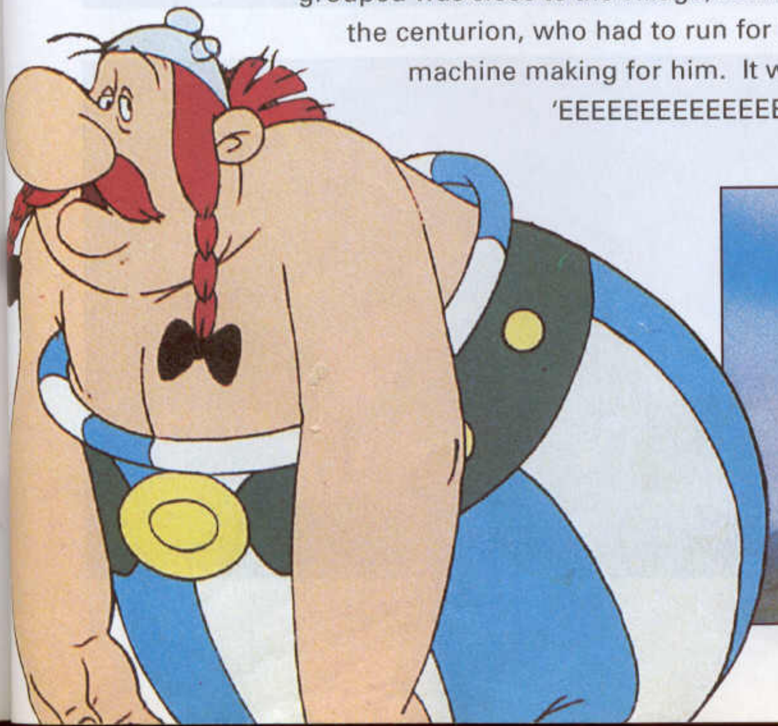
'OH NO, YOU DON'T, OBELIX! You know perfectly well you fell into the cauldron as a baby, and it had a permanent effect on you!'

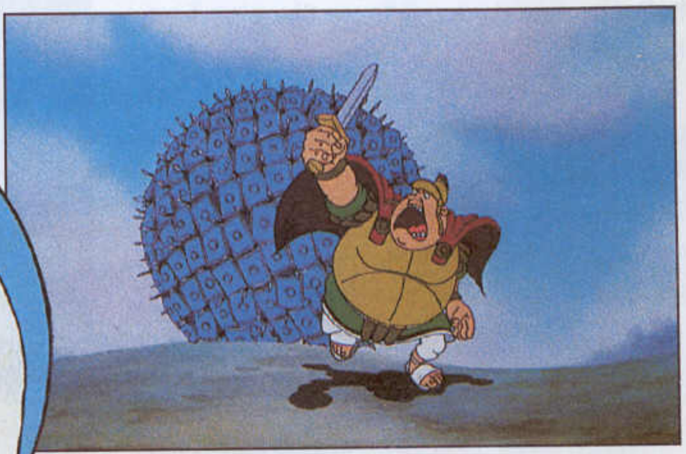
'Gngngngngn!' muttered Obelix.

And, also as usual, Obelix went away to sulk.

By now the monstrous prickly hedgehog formation into which the legionaries had grouped was close to the village, rolling faster and faster towards its goal... and towards the centurion, who had to run for it, terrified by the gigantic shadow of the infernal machine making for him. It was out of control! Very soon it swallowed him up.

'EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!'





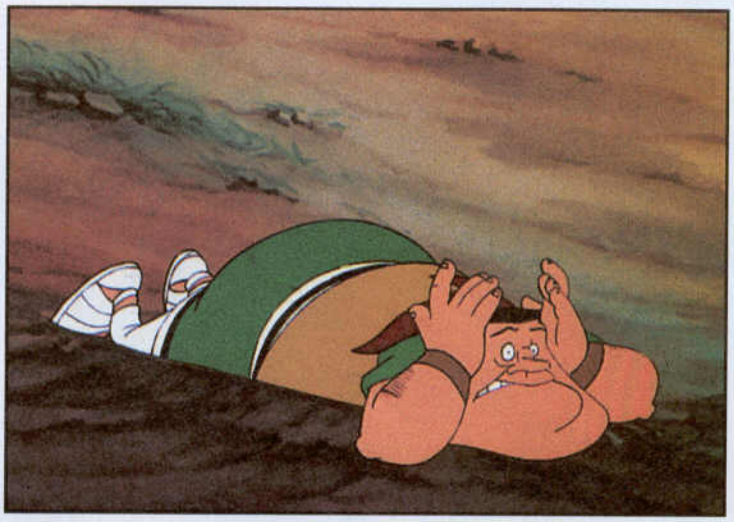
The Gauls picked that moment to charge out of their village, not at all impressed by the object coming towards them. The two massive forces met. CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!



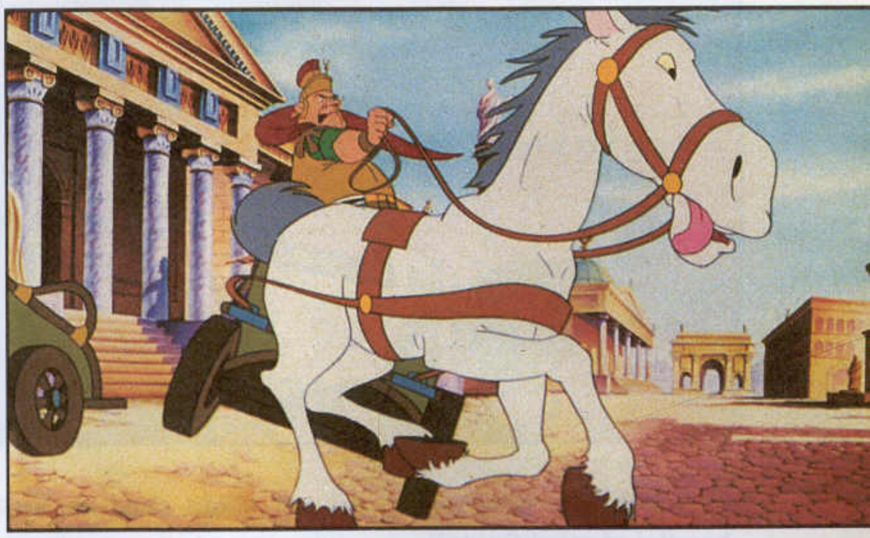


The shock of the collision burst the metal ball apart like an overripe pomegranate, scattering legionaries, helmets, shields and pilums like pips from its shell.

Driven halfway into the ground, the centurion raised his stunned head. The spectacle struck him as very depressing. Those Gauls were certainly nothing like the rest of them! He had to get back to Rome and tell Caesar. This was urgent!



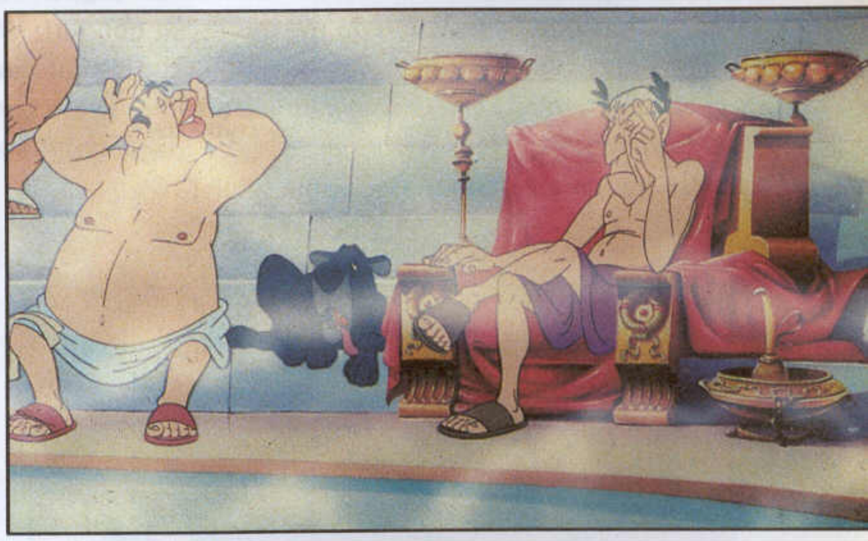
After a long journey, Minibus arrived in Rome and made his way to the Baths, where he had been informed that Caesar was sweating it out in the sudatorium with his senators. As soon as he stepped inside he slipped on the stairs and fell into a pool of water, landing up at the feet of Caesar himself.



'GLUG! Ave Caesar! He who is drenched through salutes you! GLUG!'

'Ave, ave there, Centurion Minibus! I thought you were in Gaul dealing with those spoilsport villagers in Amorica!'

'You have such a happy turn of phrase, O mighty Caesar, but the fact is, as long as they enjoy the invincible strength their druid gives them they'll carry on scoffing at your image, and the image of Rome!'



Mutters of discontent and mockery were heard from the senators present.

'Seems those Gauls are spoiling your sport, O Caesar!'

Caesar stalked furiously out of the sudatorium, pursued by the ironic gaze of the senators.

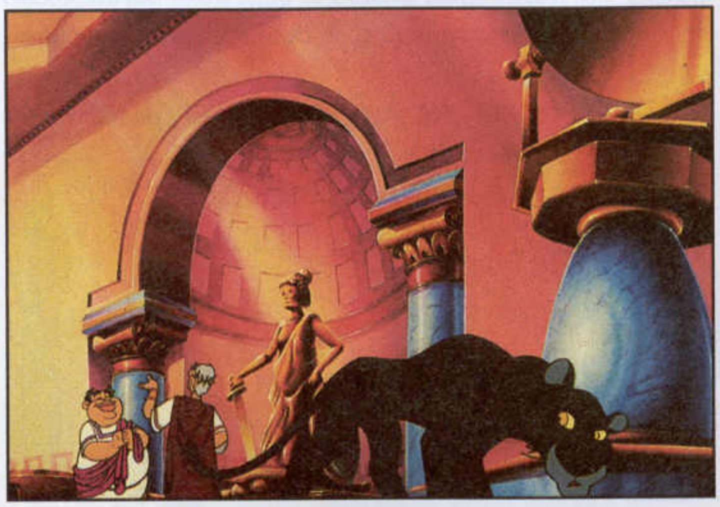
'I'll show you lot! Nothing can withstand my power!'

In his palace, Caesar paced up and down before the alarmed eyes of his mascot the black panther.

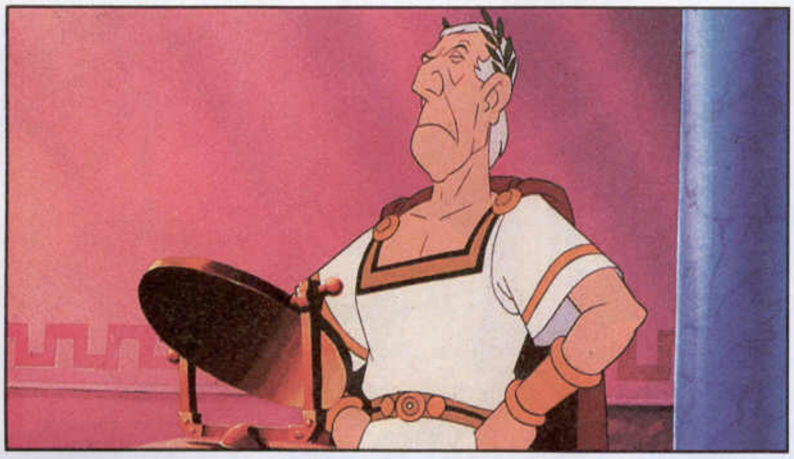
'I'm the laughing-stock of the Senate, all because of that bunch of Gaulish scoundrels! This has got to change! LUCULLUS!'

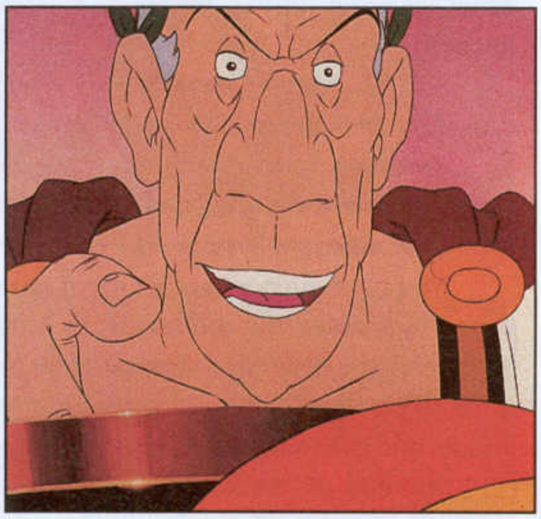
'Here I am, O mighty Caesar!'

A fat and obsequious figure, speaking in honeyed tones, made its way towards Caesar.



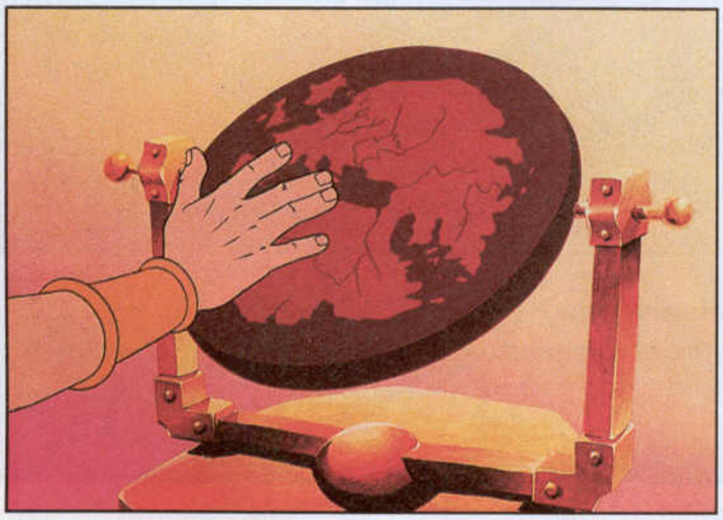


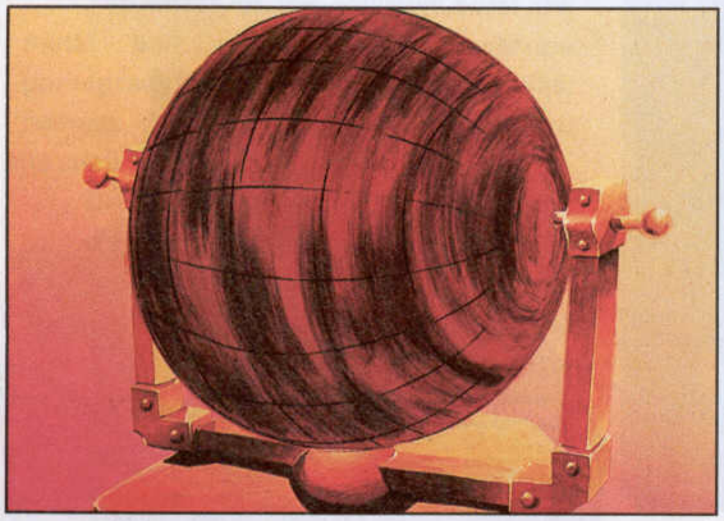




'Lucullus, how would you set about conquering that handful of rebel Gauls?'

'Oh divine Caesar, you do me too much honour! Well, for a start I'd get hold of that druid of theirs. He's the cause of all the trouble. Then I'd throw him to the lions in the Circus at feeding time. No more druid, no more magic potion, and no more potion, no more invincible Gauls!'





At the mention of feeding time the big cat licked its lips and looked hopefully at Lucullus, who felt some alarm.

'Not a bad idea, but if I fail again I'll be the laughing stock of the entire world... the world... THE WORLD!'

Caesar went over to a model of the world, which at the time, as we have mentioned, was seen as something like a pancake or a disc. The model disk moved on its axis and was fixed to a frame.

'I've had a brilliant idea! We put the druid on board ship, and once he reaches the ends of the earth... '

Caesar had placed a gold coin on the disc and was pushing it delicately towards the edge.

'OOPS! We push him off into space. He'll be spaced out once and for all!'

And the coin fell to the ground.

'That's a truly wonderful idea, O magnificent Caesar! Your cruelty is equalled only by your genius. But may I just point out, O divine Caesar, that there's a snag?'

'Snag? What snag?'

'O most sublime Caesar, do you know anyone who'd be crazy enough to take that druid to the ends of the earth?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Who?'

'YOU!'

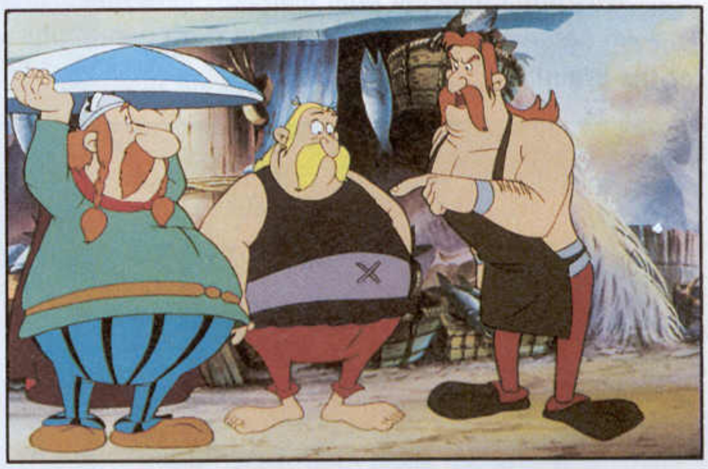
Lucullus went green and babbled, 'But I... I'm not sure I can...'

'Oh yes, you can and you will, Lucullus! I'm as sure of that as I'm sure the earth is flat!'

And before leaving the room, Caesar flicked the edge of the disk, which turned round and round on its axis so fast it looked like... a sphere.

Peace and calm had returned to the Gaulish village... or almost!

'I don't believe it!'



Vitalstatistix emerged from his hut carrying his own shield on his head.

'I simply don't believe it!'

And he made furiously for the fishmonger's stall. Unhygienix instinctively grabbed a fish and aimed it in the direction of the chief.

'My two shield-bearers ate some of your fish yesterday, and now they're writhing in agony and I have to do their job for them!'

'I was having a clearance sale!' replied Unhygienix, in injured tones. 'I'm expecting a delivery, but the ox carts bringing fish from Lutetia are on strike. They're going slow to protest against the price of hay!'

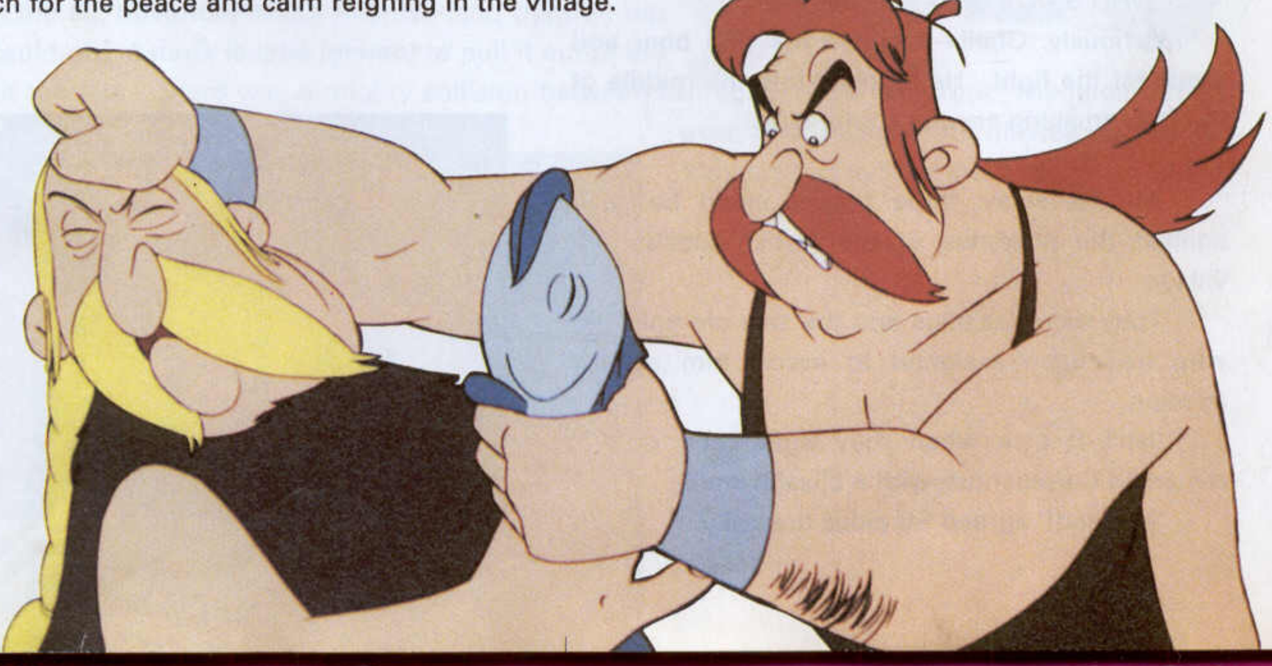
Fulliautomatix the blacksmith came over and pointed to a fish on the evil-smelling stall. 'You'd be crazy to eat anything this poisoner sells!'

'That's a perfectly good fish! It's smelt!'

'By half the village! What a pong!'

And PING! The blacksmith got a fish right in the face.

So much for the peace and calm reigning in the village.





Fish started raining down instead, as all the villagers, including Chief Vitalstatistix, picked up Unhygienix's wares and thumped each other with them.

Asterix and Obelix were on their way home from hunting, followed by Dogmatix. Several boars who had been unlucky enough to meet them were tucked under their arms. Asterix hailed the bard, who was strolling past the scene of the fight, taking no notice of it.

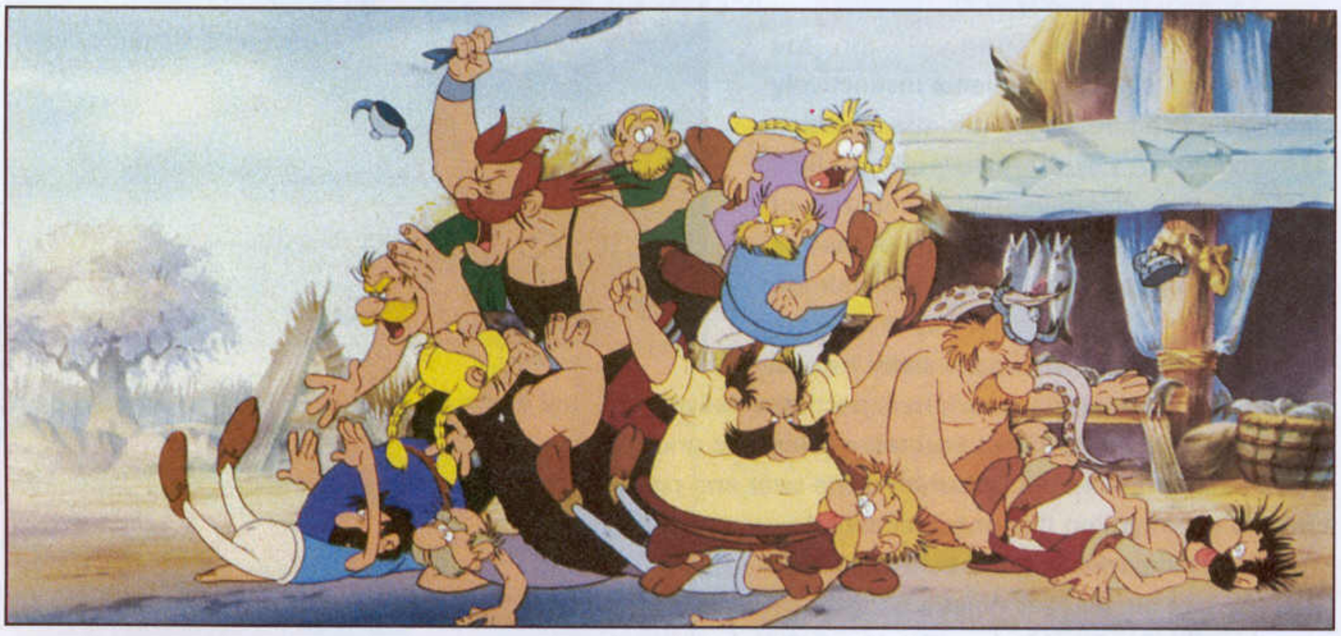
'Hey, what's in the air?'

'Only Unhygienix's fish, same as usual.'

Obelix looked self-righteous.

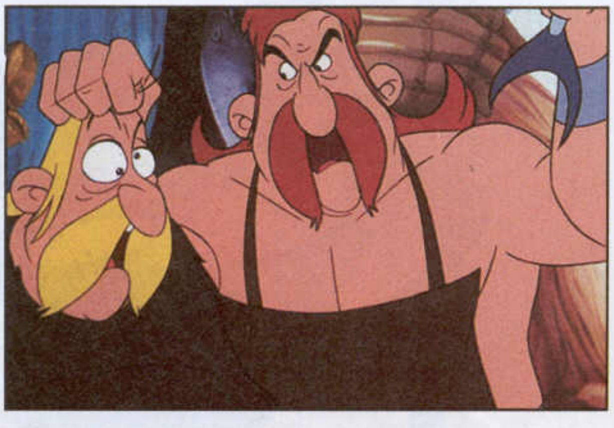
'Why don't they eat boar instead? Personally, I never touch fish!'

An anonymous voice was heard from the middle of the punch-up. 'Then you should! Fish is good for the brain!'



'WHO SAID THAT?'

Furiously, Obelix dropped his wild boar and made for the fight. He plunged into the middle of the fray, crushing several combatants.



Not far away, three figures could be seen against the shadows of the forest outside the village.

They were Lucullus and the two old soldiers, who had been assigned to escort him on his mission.

'Isn't it nice when they fight each other?' remarked Corpulentus, with a blissful smile.

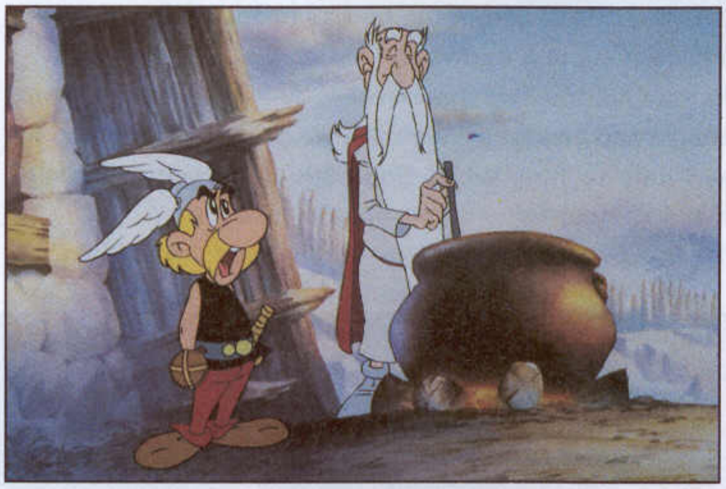
'Not half!' agreed Stupidus dreamily.



'I'll go and get ready while you two keep watch!'

And the stout figure of Lucullus disappeared into the forest. Shielded from all eyes, he took off his toga and put on a voluminous white linen robe. He draped a heavy cape round his shoulders, stuck a sickle into his belt, and completed his disguise with a false beard and moustache.

'So now it's just you against me, Getafix, my dear colleague! Ho, ho, ho!'

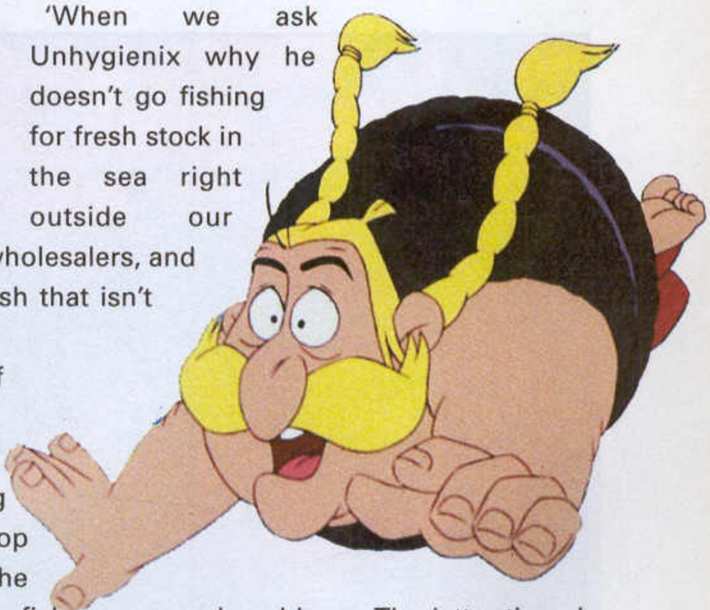


In the village, Asterix and Obelix were watching the fight, which was still raging. A fish slammed into the side of the druid's cauldron. Getafix picked it up with the tips of his fingers, making a face.

'Yuk! I need fresh fish to put in the pot of magic potion, not stuff that's already gone to pot like this!'

Asterix heaved a sigh.

'When we ask Unhygienix why he doesn't go fishing for fresh stock in the sea right outside our village, he says he prefers to buy from the best Lutetian wholesalers, and he respects his customers too much to sell them any fish that isn't guaranteed top quality!'



Getafix pointed at his cauldron, which was full of magic potion.

'Luckily we have all this in reserve!'

At that very moment, Unhygienix came soaring through the air, obviously about to crash-land right on top of the cauldron. Asterix leaped forward to pull it out of the way, but too late. There was a mighty collision between fishmonger and cauldron. The latter tipped over, and magic potion flowed out before the horrified eyes of the druid.





Asterix looked inside the cauldron.

'Luckily there's still a little potion left at the bottom, O druid'

'Yes, but it won't be enough if the Romans make trouble again!'

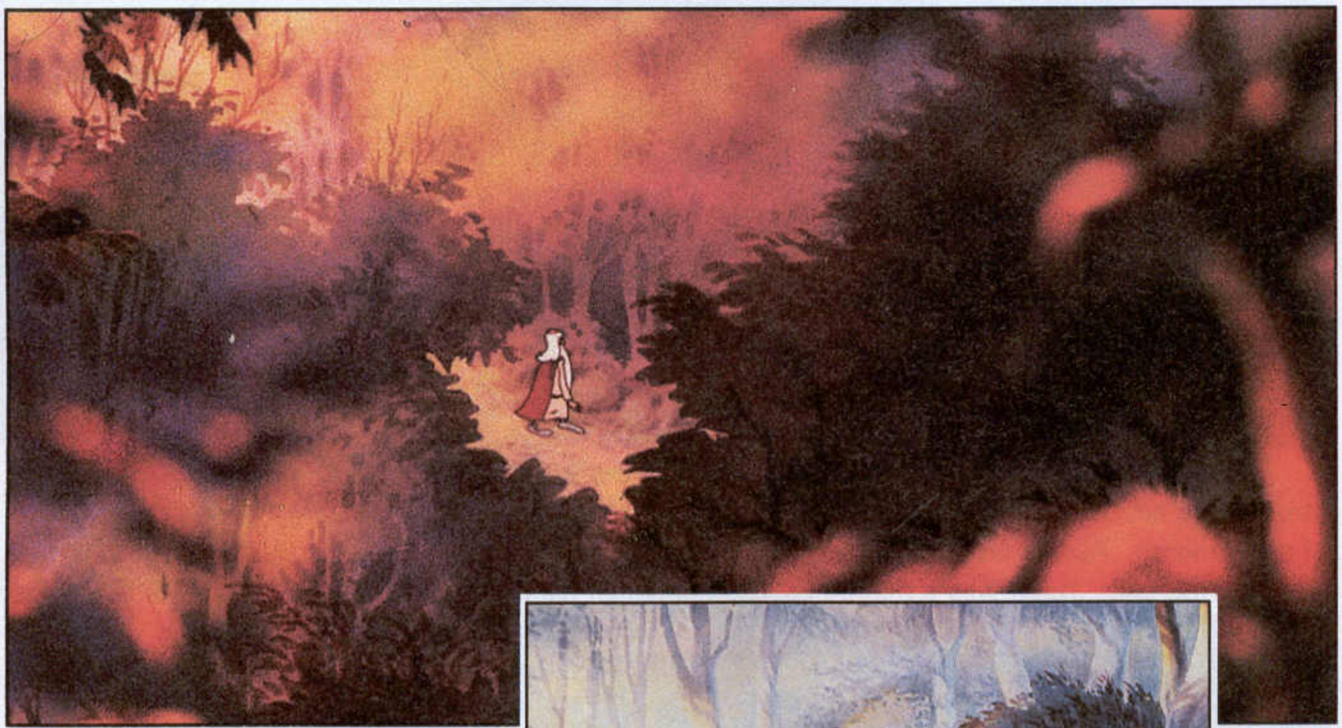
'In that case, Obelix and I will put to sea straight away and catch you some fresh fish!'

'Thanks, Asterix. And meanwhile I'll go into the forest to gather the herbs I need!'

Obelix, who had been holding Dogmatix in his arms, put him down.

'Dogmatix will go with you, Getafix! The forest's not too safe just now.'

Followed by Dogmatix, Getafix left the village and plunged into the forest. At his leisure, he gathered all the herbs whose secret was known only to him, while Dogmatix conscientiously kept sniffing in all directions.





Suddenly the little dog started barking fiercely at a bush. Lucullus, disguised as a druid, emerged from it.

'Calm down, Dogmatix! Can't you see this is only another druid like me?'

The two druids shook hands, although Dogmatix didn't seem at all keen on the stranger.



'Looking for herbs too, are you?'

'No, I'm more interested in mushrooms. I'd like your opinion of a new species I've discovered not far from here!'

'I'll be happy to take a look. You can never be too careful with mushrooms!'

Getafix followed the fake druid, along with Dogmatix, who was growling softly through clenched teeth.

They reached a clearing, and Lucullus pointed to a mushroom growing at the foot of a tree. The druid bent down to take a look.

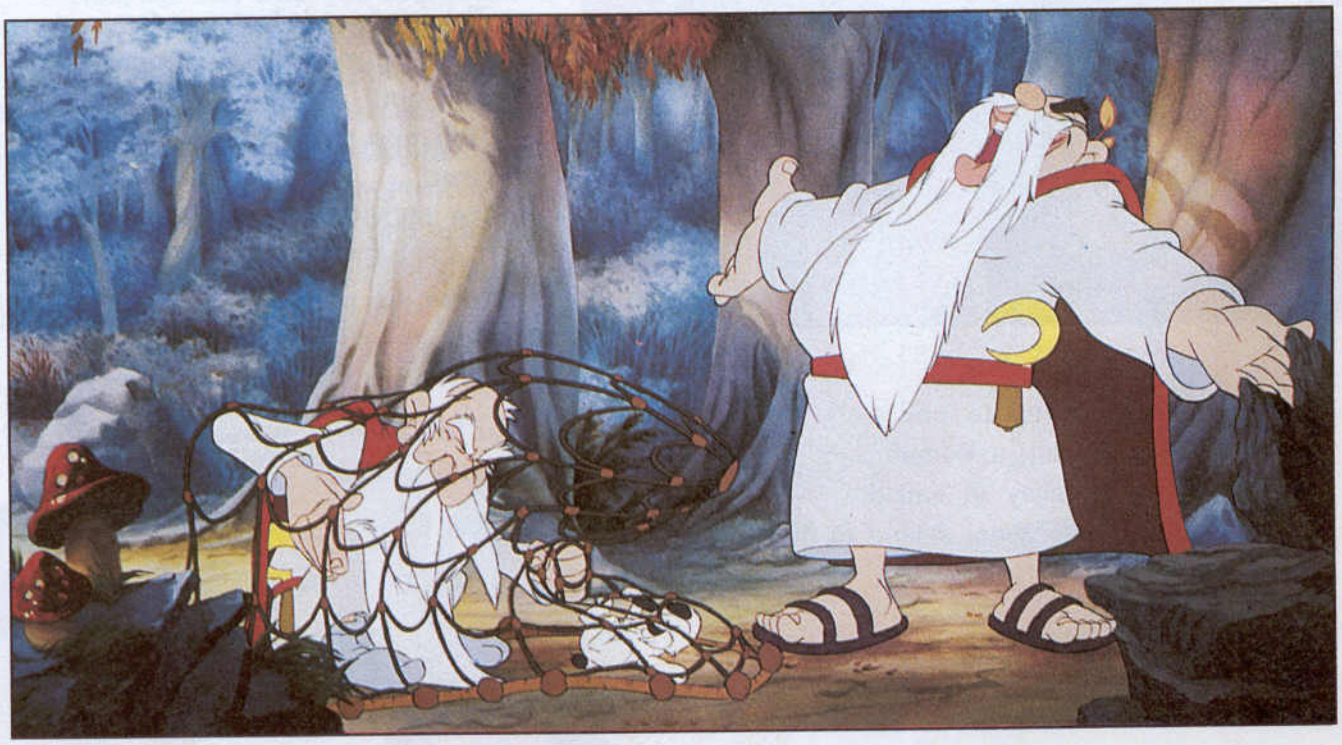
'Oh, that's a Caesar's mushroom! It's perfectly harmless!'

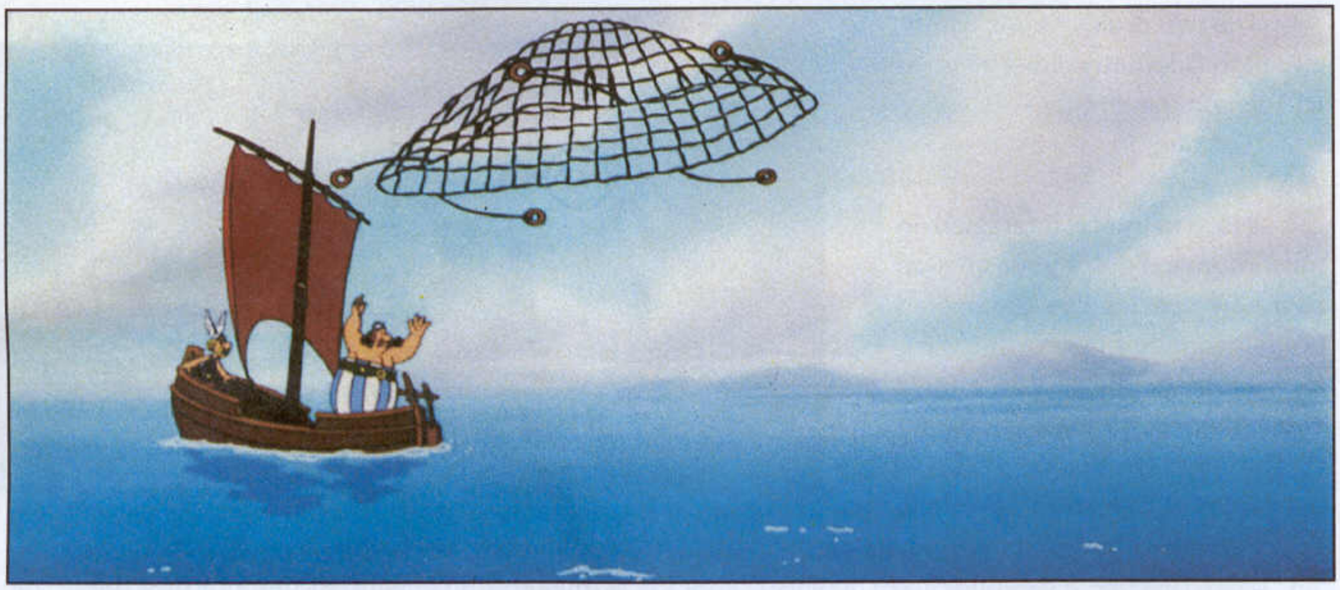
At that moment a large net fell from the tree above them, covering Getafix and Dogmatix. Laughing nastily Lucullus tore off his false whiskers.

'Harmless, is it? But not to you, my dear colleague! HA, HA, HA!'

And our unfortunate friends were hauled unceremoniously away by Corpulentus and Stupidus, while Lucullus went on chuckling.

'You're going for a nice sea voyage, a cruise to a whole new world, my dear druid!'

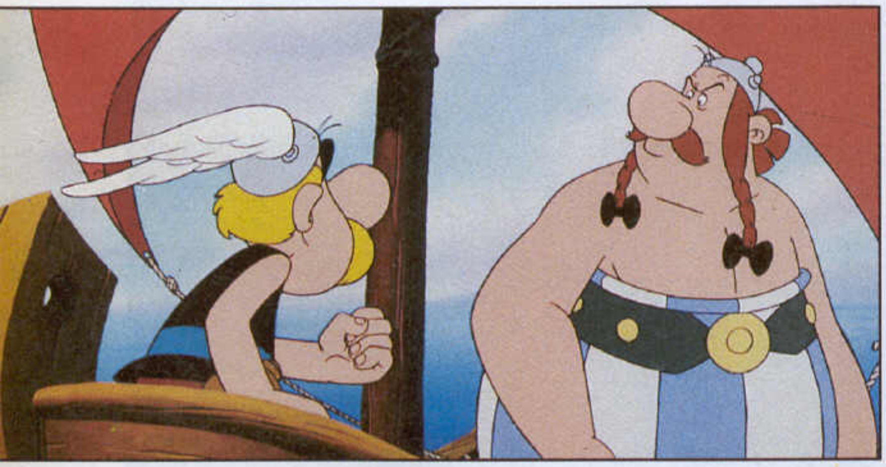




Meanwhile, Asterix and Obelix were out at sea in a little fishing boat. Asterix thought they were far enough from shore to start fishing, and told Obelix to throw out the net.

'Aye, aye, cap'n!'

And Obelix did indeed throw out the net. He threw it a very long way out. After a while Asterix, who was steering, thought it would be full enough.



'Pull the net in, Obelix!'

'How do you mean, pull it in? I've thrown it out!'

'You mean you didn't tie it to something first?'

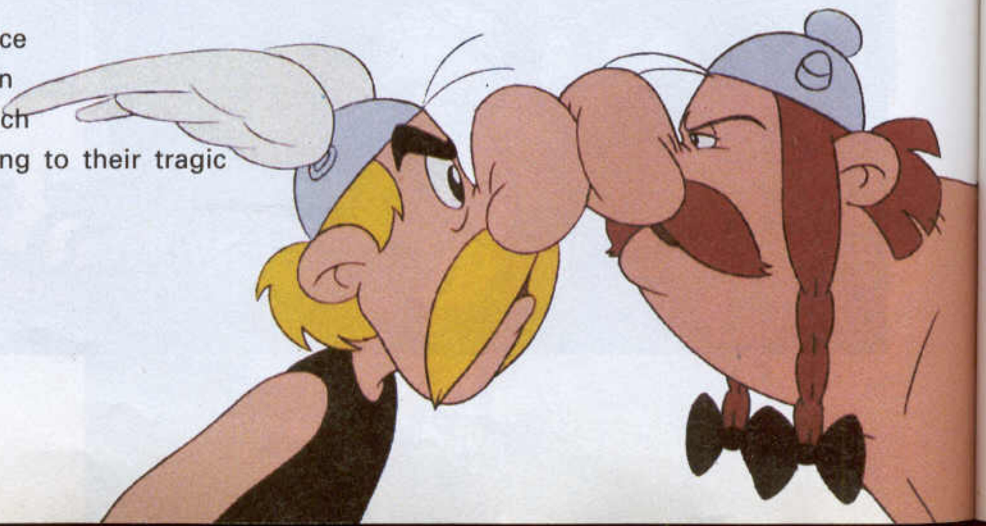
The two friends lost their tempers.

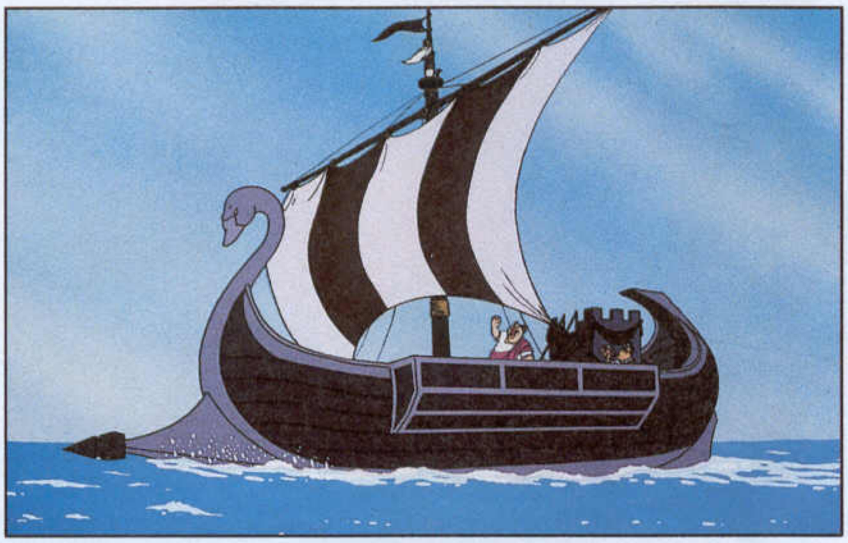
'You told me to throw it out, so I did throw it out!'

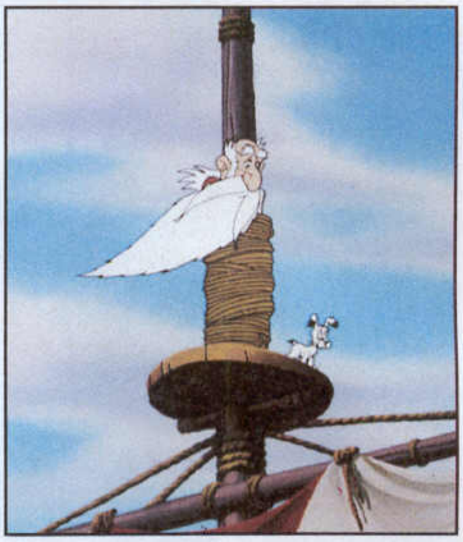
'You must be crazy, throwing a net out like that!'

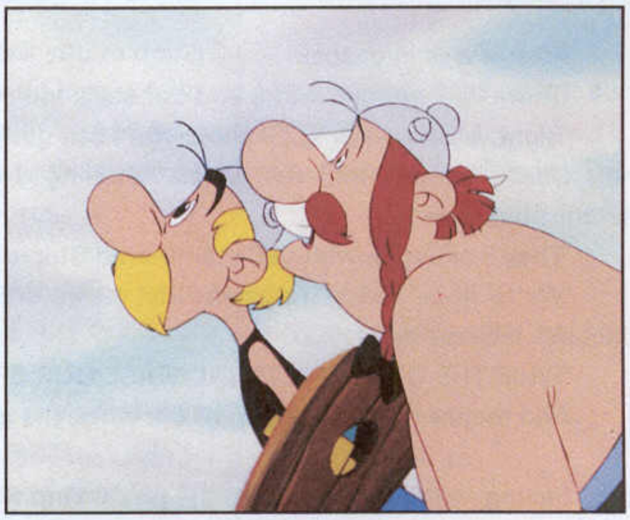
'I'M A MENHIR DELIVERY-MAN, I AM, NOT A FISHERMAN!'

Nose to nose, the two of them, though still friends at heart, kept shouting insults, failing to notice that they were passing a Roman galley... the very galley in which Getafix and Dogmatix were sailing to their tragic fate.









Getafix was up in the crow's nest, tied to the mast. Dogmatix was barking frantically. He was too high up to jump for it. Down on the bridge, Lucullus and his two side-kicks were very pleased to have accomplished their mission successfully.

In their fishing boat, the friends were still going at each other hammer and tongs.

'The fish are certainly in no danger with you about!'

'Who cares? I don't eat fish anyway!!!'

'Well, like they said, you ought to!!!'

'WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!'

Surprised, the two mariners stopped arguing for a moment. They were baffled.

'That... that sounds like Dogmatix!' said Obelix.

'ASTERIX! OBELIX! HELP!!!!'

'That's Getafix's voice!' said Asterix.

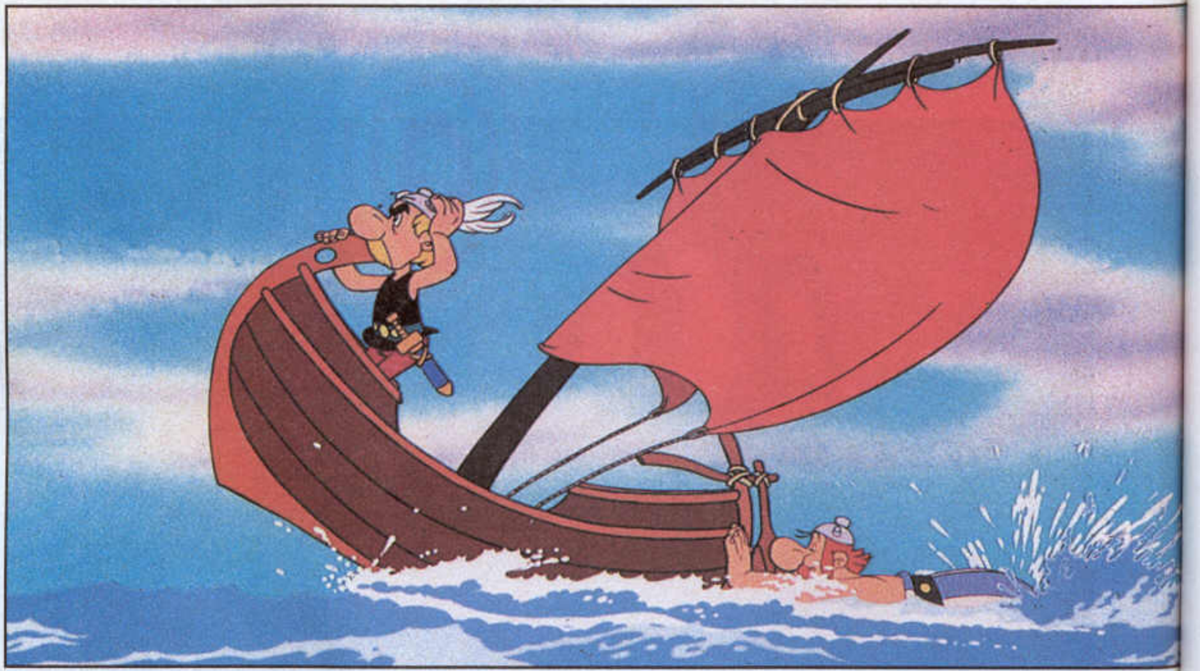
The two Gauls looked up and saw the galley passing with its prisoners.

'QUICK, OBELIX! WE MUST CATCH UP WITH THAT GALLEY!!!'

Lucullus appeared at the rail of the galley.

'Too late, Gauls! You will never see your druid again! Ho, ho, ho!'





Asterix was in despair.

'There isn't enough wind, and our sail's too small! How can we ever catch up with that galley?'

'Right, Mister Asterix, I'll show you I can get good ideas too!'

Obelix jumped into the water. Striking out with his feet, he pushed the little boat along at astonishing speed.

'They'll catch up with us!' stammered Stupidus.

'We're done for! I recognize the nasty little dwarf and the big fat boor!' wailed Corpulentus. Lucullus interrupted.

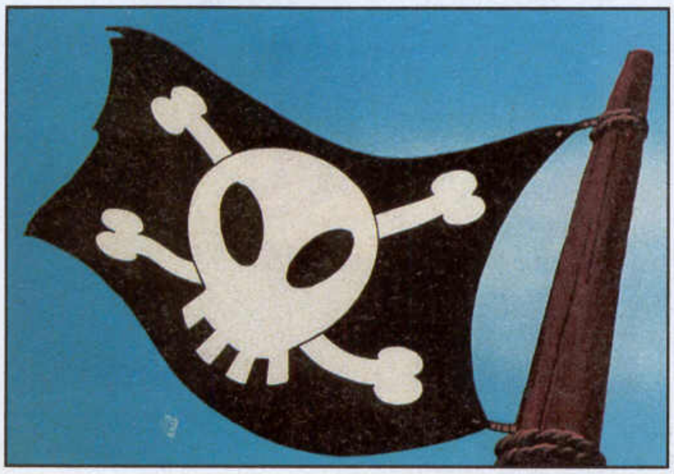
'WHIP THE OARSMEN TO INCREASE OUR SPEED!'

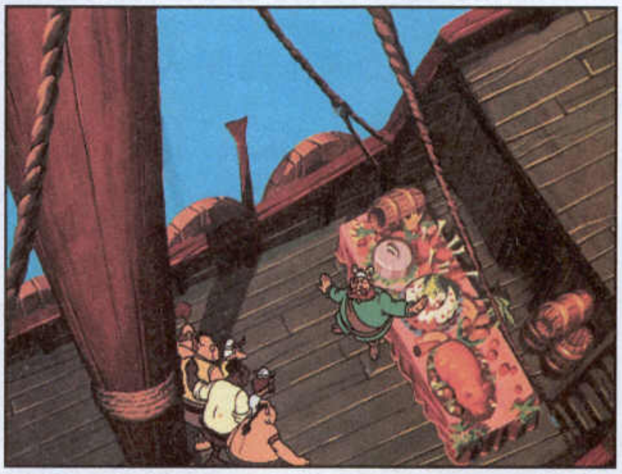
And thanks to this cracking of the whip, the galley managed to maintain its lead.

Sailing in the same waters, the pirate ship was getting ready for a party. A large table had been set up on deck. It was laden with delicious food, its fragrance wafting through the air in a light breeze.

'This is a great day, cap'n... your birthday!'

'Thanks, men! At least we'll be safe from those wretched Gauls out here!'







Obelix, still pushing the little boat ahead of him, sniffed the air with interest.

'Do you smell what I smell, Asterix?'

'No, I don't smell anything! Hey, what do you think you're doing?'

For Obelix had suddenly changed course. He was no longer following in the wake of the galley, but making straight for the pirate ship. CRAAAASH! He split its hull from side to side.

In the middle of the wreckage of the ship, the big birthday cake was still afloat, its candles lit. The pirate crew, swimming round their captain, sang in chorus.

'Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to... '

'All right, don't overdo it!' growled the pirate captain, clinging to the wreckage.

Back in the fishing boat a little later, Obelix had just finished enjoying the lavish meal he had confiscated from the pirate ship.

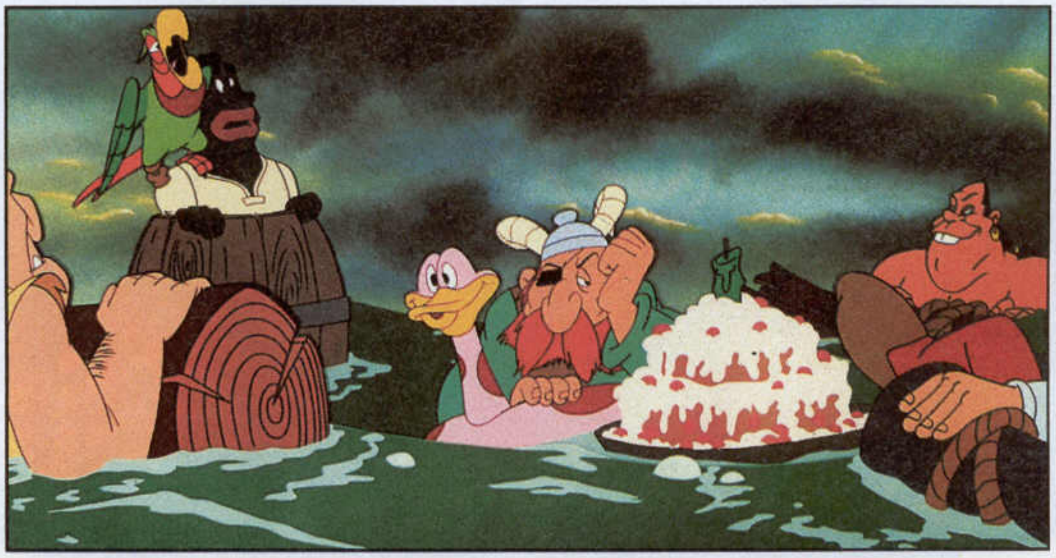
'I feel better now! All that sea bathing really gave me an appetite!'

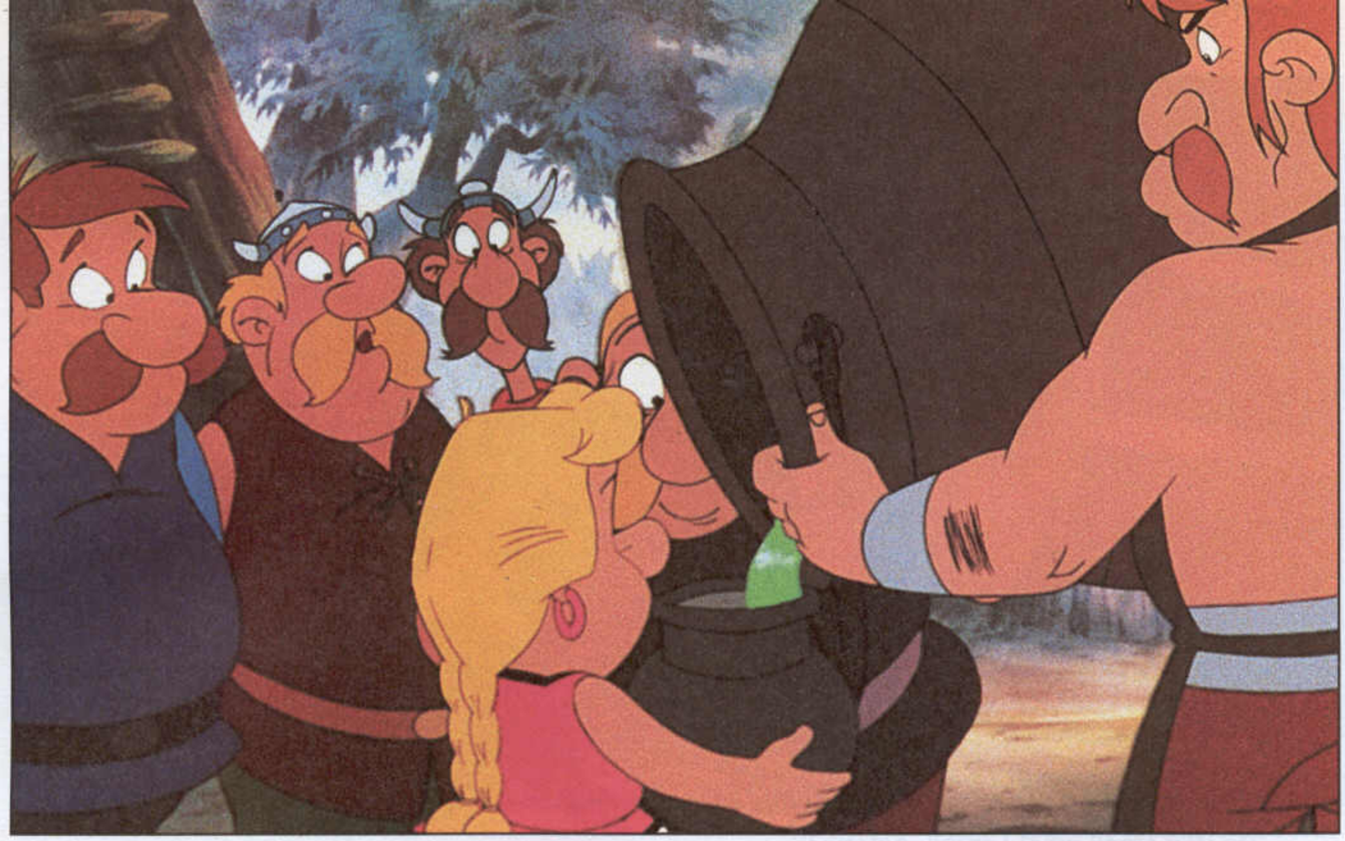
Asterix was furious.

'You great pig! Your greed has lost us any chance of rescuing Getafix and Dogmatix!!!'

'Don't worry, Asterix! I feel fit enough to catch up with them now!'

And he plunged into the water to push the boat on again.





Far away in the Gaulish village, the atmosphere was gloomy. Chief Vitalstatistix had called a council of war.

'By now we have to assume that our dear friend Getafix and brave little Dogmatix have fallen into a Roman trap!'

Cacofonix, who was sitting in on the council, was very anxious.

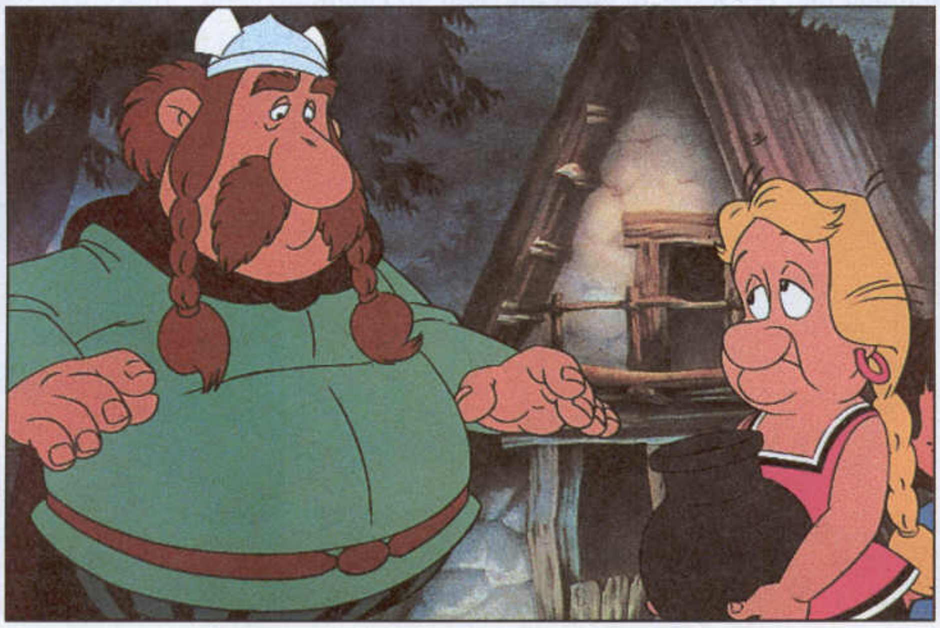
'And Asterix and Obelix aren't back from their fishing trip! There's something fishy about that!'

'I always knew they'd would be out of their depth, going to sea for fresh fish!' said Unhygienix. 'It's a dangerous business!'

'Not half as dangerous as eating the fish you sell!' said Fulliautomatix.

'Silence! This is serious! We have very little magic potion left, and unless our friends come home we're going to be in difficulties if we have to fight the Romans!'

'THEN LET'S JUST FIGHT THEM!' cried men, women and children in chorus, feeling a surge of bold defiance. Storm clouds were brewing over the village.





The sky was also stormy above the frail little craft which had now been at sea for several days, still being pushed by the stalwart Obelix, and still in pursuit of the Roman galley.

But one day it finally showed up on the horizon, much to the delight of Asterix.

'There it is, Obelix!!! One more little effort and we'll be level with it. How are you feeling?'

'Me? Fine! Just a little peckish!'

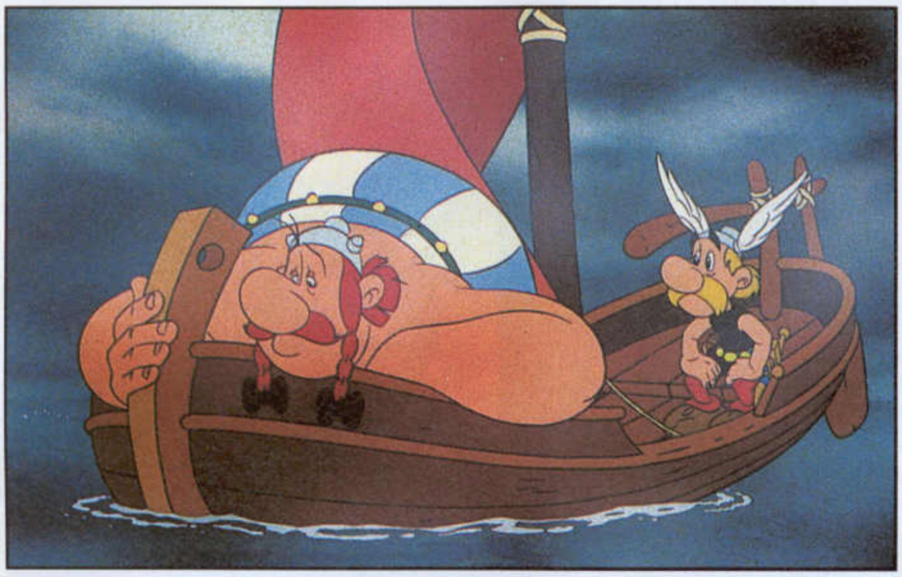
The Gauls too had been sighted, from the Roman galley.

'By Jupiter! We haven't shaken off those diabolical Gauls yet!' said Stupidus in alarm. Lucullus was more confident.

'Huh! By my reckoning we should soon be coming to the end of the world anyway!'

All of a sudden, however, the sea grew rough, its waves whipped up by a strong wind as the storm broke. Obelix had got back into the frail fishing boat, and Asterix was trying to stay on course. But the mast and the little sail were soon blown down, and the boat was flung this way and that.





After a long, terrible night, the sun rose over a sea which was now much calmer. Of course the galley was no longer in sight. Asterix felt discouraged.

'Oh no! We're completely lost now, Obelix!'

'Asterix!'

'What?'

'I'm hungry!'

We all have worries of our own... After a moment, Asterix plucked up courage again.

'Obelix, did you notice that the galley kept sailing towards the setting sun? If we do the same, we may yet catch up with them. Can you still make the effort?'

'Oh, if that's all you want... !'

And the little boat was off again, lifted half out of the water as Obelix propelled it on with his amazing strength.

On board the Roman galley, Lucullus had tight hold of Dogmatix.



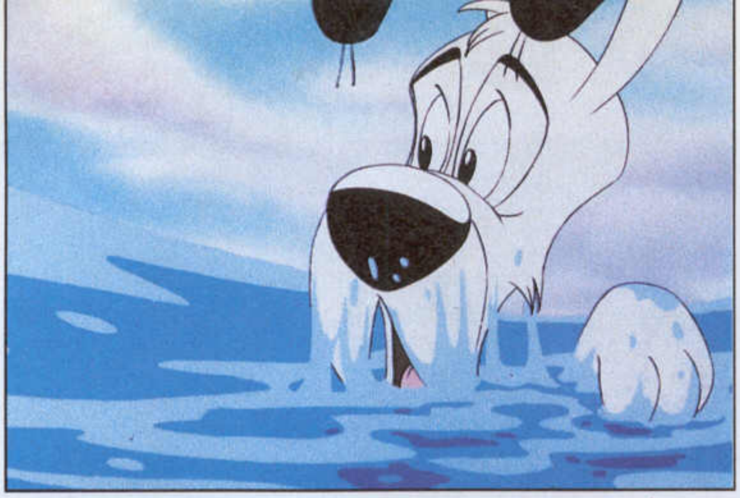


'The sharks around here look hungry. See what could happen to you, druid, even before you fall off the edge of the earth!'

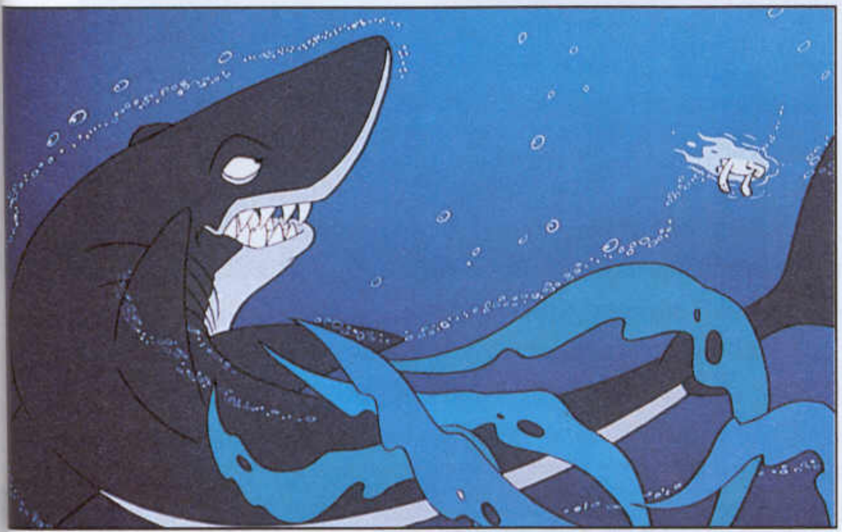
And Lucullus held his arm out over the rail, dangling Dogmatix above the water.

'NOOOOOOOOOOO! Not that! Not Dogmatix!' howled Getafix, who was still tied up.

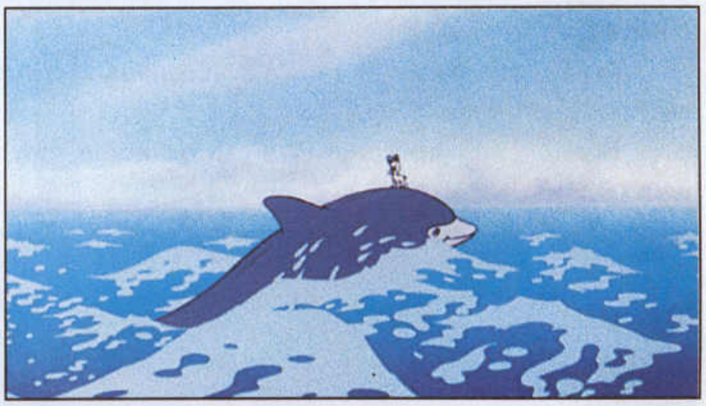
Dogmatix gave one of Lucullus's fingers a nasty bite. The Roman yelled with pain and let go of the little dog, who fell into the sea.



As he swam, Dogmatix saw the galley move away, while the druid kept calling down curses on the Roman's head. Soon he was all alone in the middle of the ocean. But not for long. A dark shadow was swimming around him. It was one of those sharks Lucullus had mentioned. The ravenous monster opened its huge mouth, which was full of teeth, and made straight for Dogmatix, who felt sure his end had come. But suddenly... BOING! A third character took a hand, colliding with the shark so hard that it was flung up out of the water, and it swam away without more ado.



Overcome by emotion, weariness and hunger, Dogmatix let himself slowly sink. But his rescuer, who turned out to be a handsome dolphin, soon brought him to the surface again. Perched on the dolphin's back, Dogmatix decided life was worth living after all, and barked happily by way of thanking his new friend.



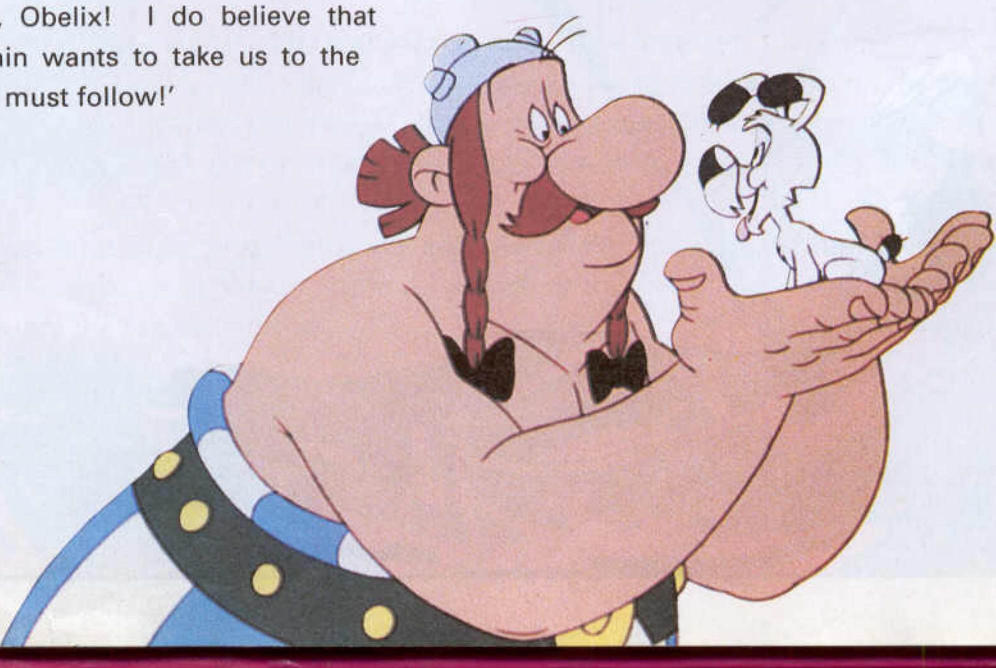
'Woof! Woof! Woof!'

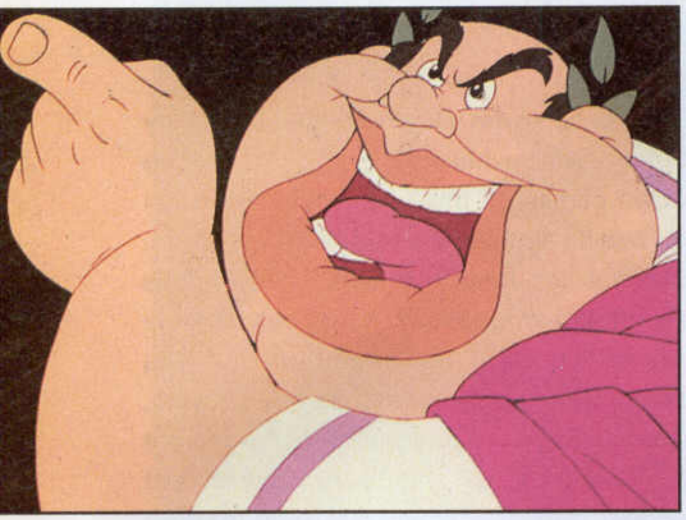
'Who was that going woof, woof, woof?' asked Asterix.

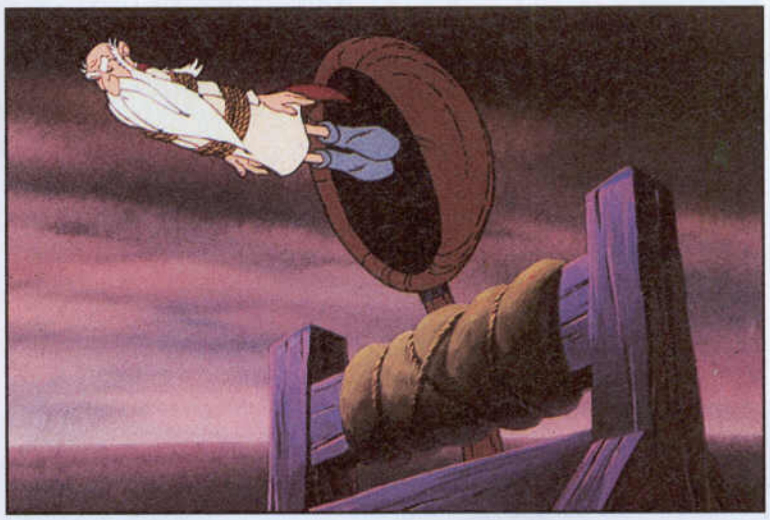
'It's my dear little dog!' cried Obelix, beside himself with joy as he grabbed hold of Dogmatix and helped him into the boat.

After an emotional reunion, Asterix noticed that the dolphin seemed to be trying to get them to follow it.

'Quick, Obelix! I do believe that good dolphin wants to take us to the galley! We must follow!'







At the same moment, the Roman galley sighted land.

'Here it is! We've arrived! Stop the ship!' yelled Lucullus, for the Roman thought the coast in sight could be nothing but the edge of the pancake of the earth, with dark, sinister space beyond. Getafix was brought down on deck and placed in a specially prepared catapult.

'Hurry up! I can see the Gaulish boat making for us!' shouted Corpulentus.

At the very moment when the little fishing boat, following the dolphin, was about to draw alongside the galley, CRAAASH! The catapult shot poor Getafix up in the air, and he flew off into the unknown.

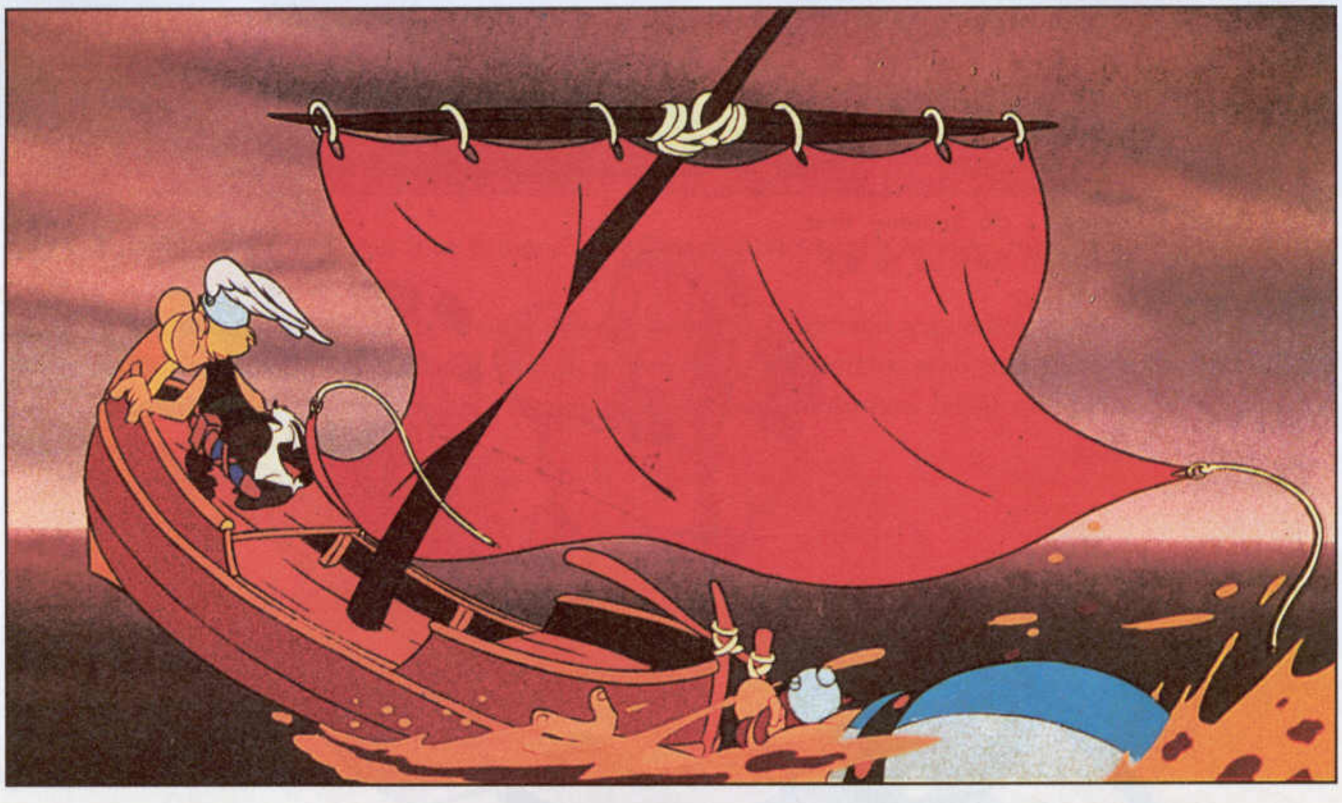
'QUICK, OBELIX! WE MUST CATCH GETAFIX!'

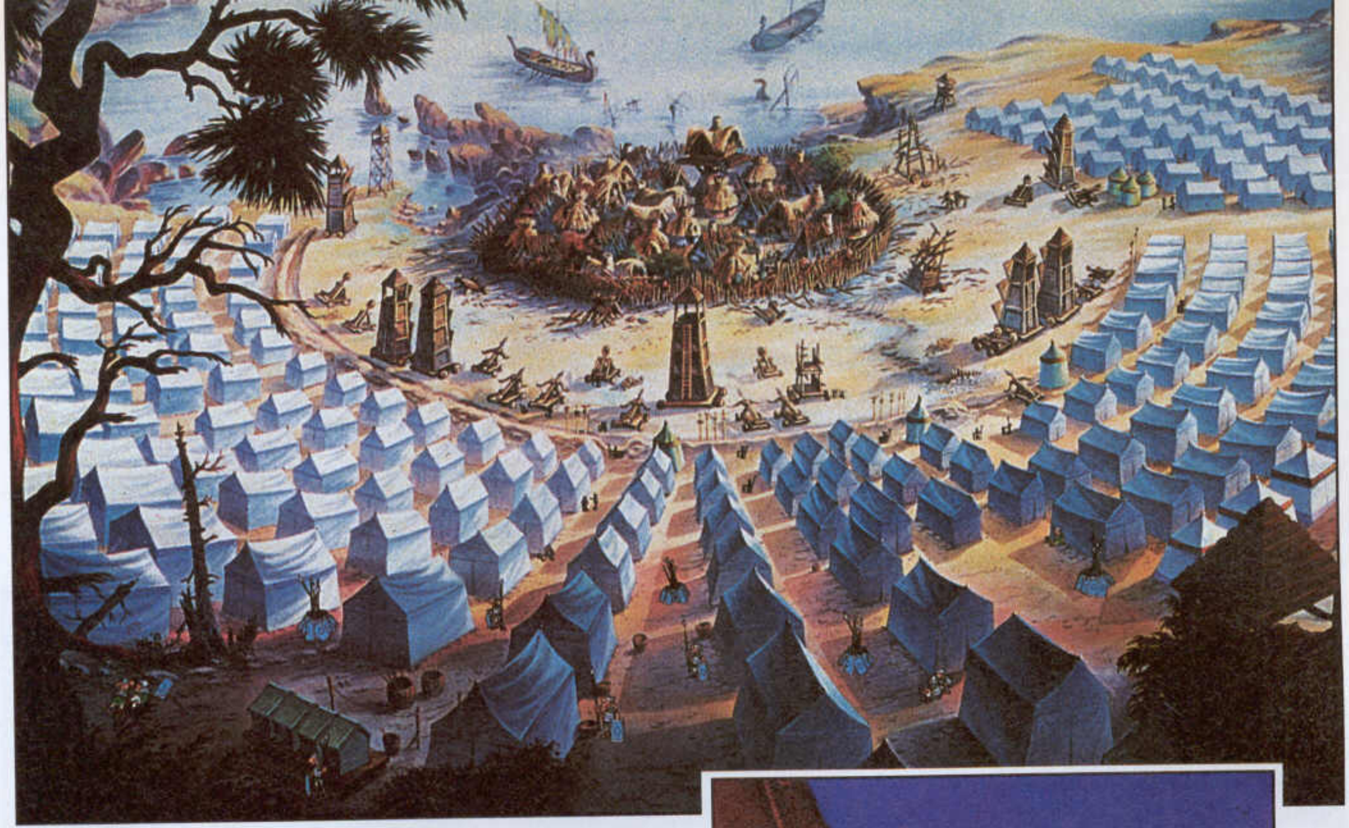


And the boat, still propelled by Obelix, continued on its wild course... a course so wild that it brought the vessel up on a beach, where it ploughed an enormous furrow before crashing on some rocks.

The Roman galley had turned. Lucullus was rubbing his hands with glee.

'Mission accomplished! We can go home now! Oh, won't Caesar be pleased!'







Meanwhile, Julius Caesar had decided to take a hand personally in the conquest of the Gaulish village which insisted on defying him. A determined siege of the little village was now in progress. Engines of war were trained on it: rock-throwers, catapults, ballistas, battering rams, everything had been brought to bear, with a view to finishing it off once and for all. Caesar had assembled his general staff in his tent. Among them was Centurion Minibus.

'Before we all storm the place in a body, I want to make quite sure those Gauls don't have any more of the brew that makes them so powerful!'

'Er... how will we find out, O Caesar?' enquired Minibus timidly.

'Easy, O Centurion. You and your men will be guinea pigs. We'll soon see if they have any left!'

In the village, Chief Vitalstatistix had assembled his own warriors.

'We're going to have to take what little magic potion we have left to beat off the first attack!'

'And after we've taken the last drop of magic potion, O chief, then what?' Fulliautomatix asked him.

'After that we can only put our trust in the return of Asterix, Obelix, Getafix and Providence!'

Minibus and his legionaries cautiously approached the fence around the village. They were not planning any sophisticated, clever military formations this time. The only one they expected to demonstrate was the Retreat in Disarray.

The wild rush of Gauls coming out of the village, and its aftermath, confirmed only too clearly that this would have been the best idea. But it was too late! On the battlefield, those legionaries who still could limped back to camp.

The fury of the Gauls had not spared Minibus himself. Lame, ragged, bruised and minus several teeth, he reported back to Caesar.

'O, Thaethar, we think they thtill have thome magic pothion, in fact we're thure of it!'

'I can be patient. We'll wait until they've finished the last of their supplies!'



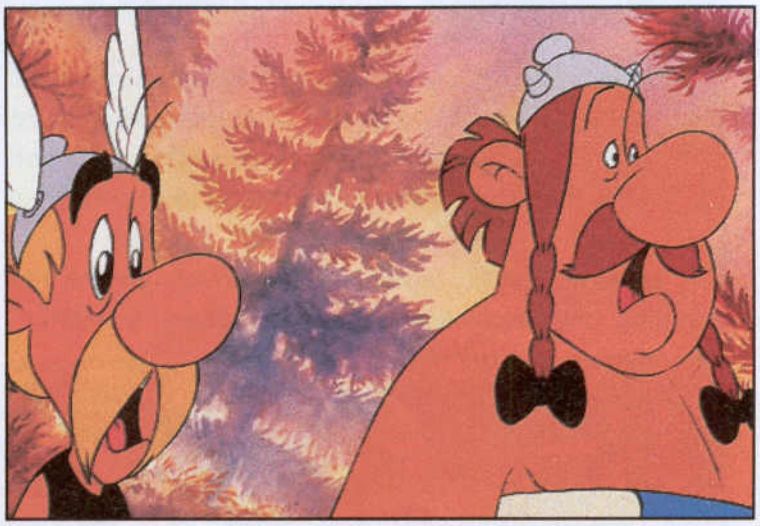
Still rather dazed by their violent landing in this unknown territory, Asterix, Obelix and Dogmatix were beginning to recover.

'Where are we, Asterix?'

'No idea, but let's make for the interior! We have to find Getafix.'

Our friends walked on through a new and unknown landscape. Soon they came to a forest.

'There must be some wild boar here! Why, it's just like our forest near the village at home!'



Asterix wasn't so sure. 'We must go carefully, all the same!'

Dogmatix suddenly came to a halt in front of a bush.

'Look at that, Asterix! Dogmatix has picked up the scent of a boar already. Goody, goody, goody! Something to eat at last!'





A bird something like a chicken with black feathers emerged from the bushes, going 'Gobble gobble! Gobble gobble!' It was, of course, a turkey, a fowl wholly unknown to the Gauls of those days. Alarmed by this strange creature, Dogmatix ran for shelter in the arms of Obelix, who seemed rather interested by the encounter.

'Who knows, that funny bird may be good to eat!' thought Obelix, and he plunged into the undergrowth. He soon came back with a turkey in each hand.

'Hey, Asterix! Get a nice fire going! That gobbler had a lot of friends! So at least we'll have something to eat until we find the wild boar!' And they were very soon tucking into turkey.

At night-fall, as they were sitting by the fire, Obelix stretched and yawned. But Asterix was still worried.

'It's getting late. We must set out to look for our druid tomorrow, Obelix!'

'Good idea. Good night, Asterix! YAAAAAWN!'

And the two friends and their little dog fell fast asleep, unaware of the strange, feathered figures watching them from the shadows.

When they woke up next morning, Obelix rubbed his stomach.

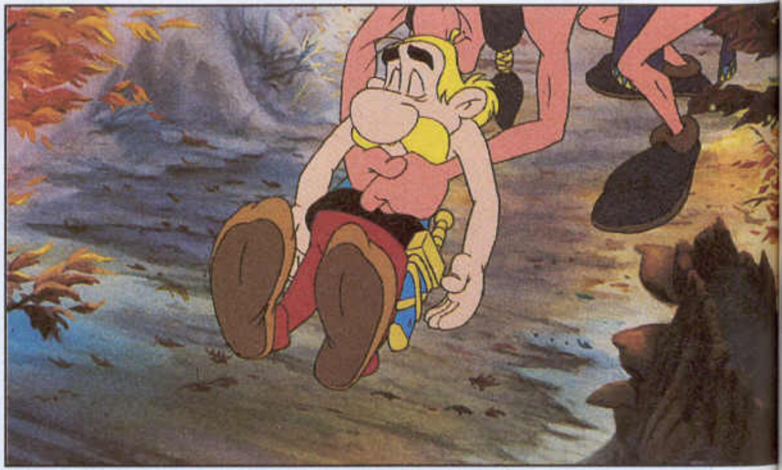
'I'm hungry! Light the fire again, Asterix. I'm going to take Dogmatix hunting for some gobblers!'

'You're hopeless, Obelix, you really are!'

Asterix, all alone, looked around him. 'Funny place,' he thought. 'It's like a new world where something might happen to you any moment... '

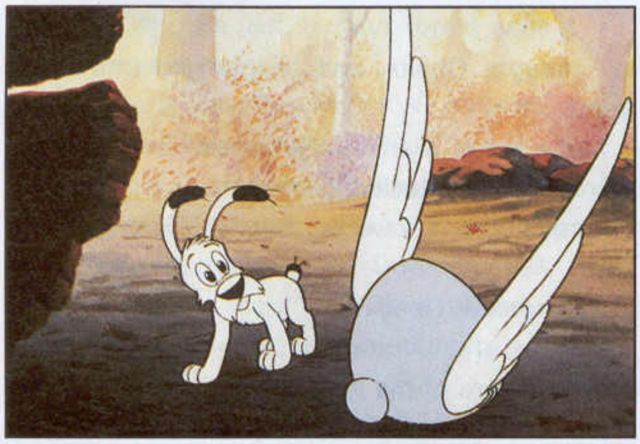
As he spoke, he was hit on the head by a tomahawk thrown by an expert hand. Stunned, he lay flat





on the ground, and some fierce-looking Indians appeared.





Far away in the forest, unaware of this drama, Obelix was bending down to address Dogmatix, who was listening like a good little dog.

'Now, I'm going to teach you a hunting trick, Dogmatix! You imitate the call of your prey. Listen! GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE!'

A little way off some more 'gobble gobbles' answered from the branches of a tall tree.

'Hear that? The bird must have its nest up there! Come on, let's get it down!'

On reaching the foot of the tree Obelix shook it hard. However, instead of a turkey an Indian fell out of the tree. He had taken Obelix's call for a signal. The poor man fell to the ground with a loud KERPLONK! The startled Obelix scratched his head.

'Maybe he's a Roman disguised as a gobbler! I'll take him back to Asterix!'

Dragging the Indian along by one leg, Obelix returned to the place where he had left Asterix. All he found was his friend's helmet, knocked off by the shock of the blow. Obelix, feeling worried, decided that more Romans disguised as gobblers must have kidnapped Asterix. He shook his feathered Roman hard, but nothing happened. So he picked up Asterix's helmet, and told his little dog: 'Seek, Dogmatix! Seek!'

And, still pulling the Indian behind him, he set off after Dogmatix, who was following the scent of Asterix's kidnappers.



In the Indian camp, Asterix slowly came round from the hefty blow on his head. He found himself tied to a stake... and - what a surprise! - he heard Getafix's voice behind him.

'How are you feeling, Asterix?'

Asterix was beside himself with joy when he saw Getafix, tied to the same stake.

'Getafix!!! Here you are at last! But who are these people, and where are we?'

'I'm not sure yet, but what I do know now is that, contrary to what that ignoramus Caesar thinks, the earth isn't flat but... '

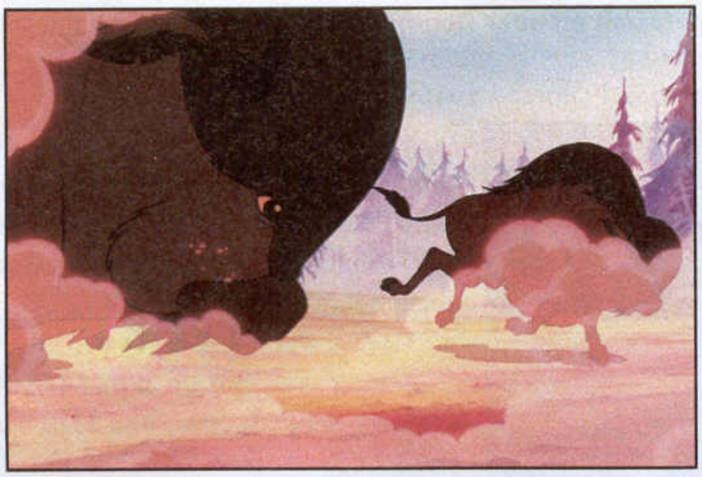


'BUT?'

'BUT ROUND, ASTERIX!'

Pleased to learn this interesting fact, Asterix saw the Indians start moving and dancing around them to the sinister beat of a drum. To enliven the festive occasion, some of them even pretended to throw their weapons at the two Gauls.





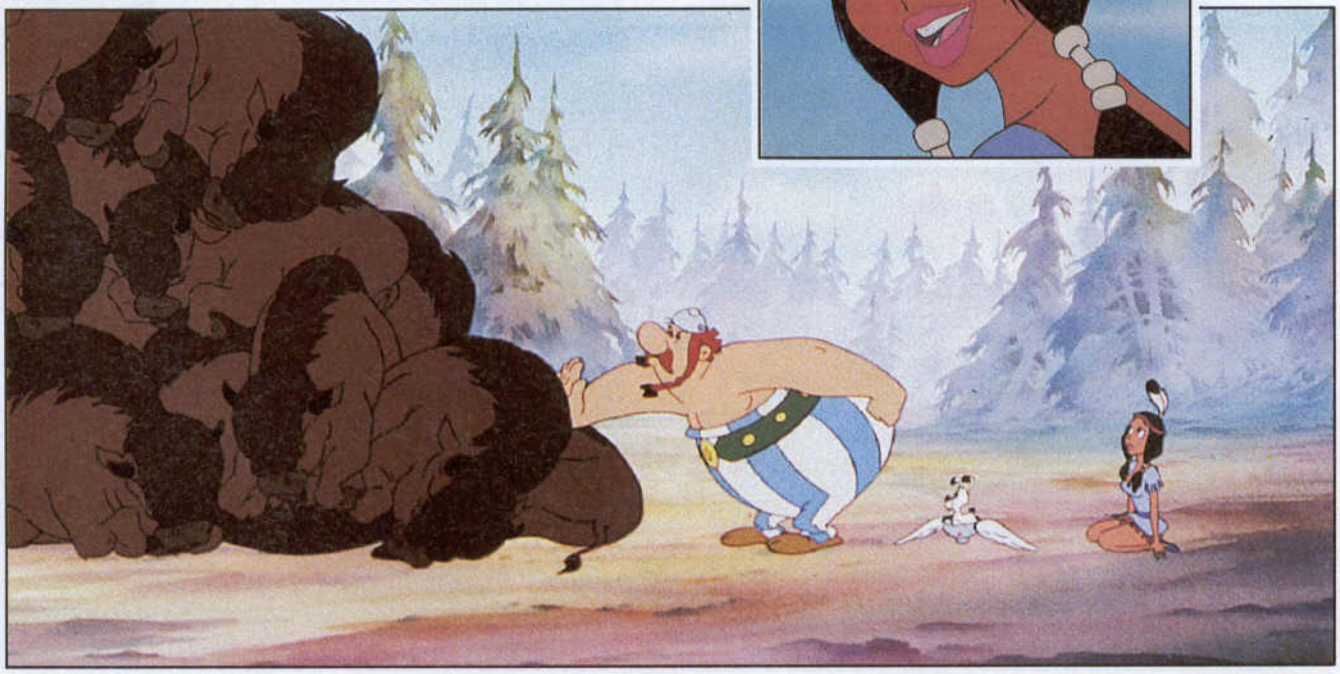


While the Indians were having fun, Obelix, still following Dogmatix, was crossing a vast prairie. He was surprised to hear a low thundering noise, which grew louder and louder and made the ground tremble beneath his feet. In the distance, a herd of bison was galloping along in a cloud of dust. And ahead of the herd, a panic-stricken Indian girl was running for her life, to escape being trampled to death.

Forgetting what he was there for, Obelix changed direction and went to the girl's help. Would he get there in time? He was not at all sure, because to make matters worse, the poor girl tripped and fell. Too exhausted to move, she abandoned herself to her fate. But a sudden silence made her turn round. She was relieved to see that a strange figure had made the herd behind her stop dead. The bison had been piled up into a huge pyramid by the shock of colliding with Obelix's outstretched hand. Full of gratitude to her rescuer, the Indian girl flung her arms round Obelix and kissed one of his fat cheeks.

Obelix went red with embarrassment, and shifted from foot to foot, while Dogmatix sighed contemptuously and raised his eyes to heaven.



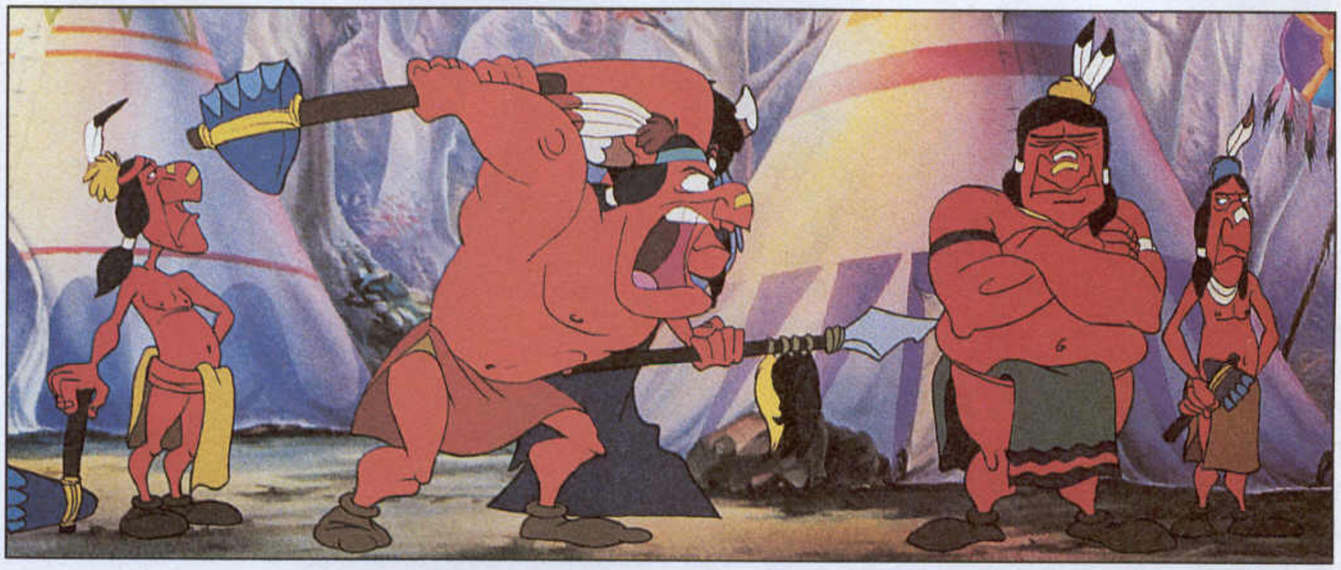


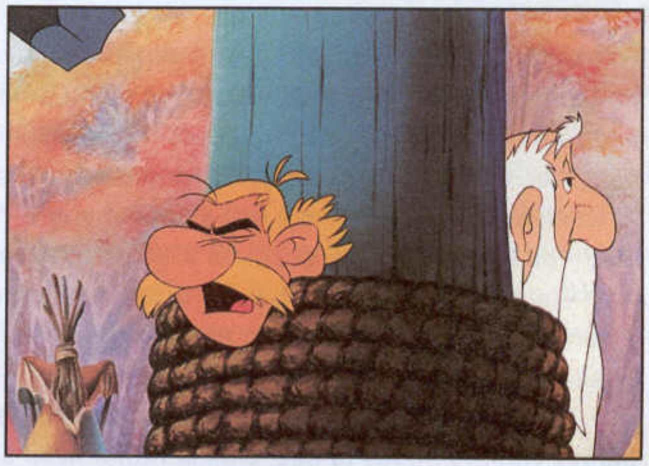
In the Indian camp, things looked bad for Asterix and Getafix. A character wearing a bearskin and a head-dress with bison's horns had stopped the drumming and the warriors' dance. He came over to Asterix and spoke to him, waving an amulet he was holding in the air.

'HOW! HOW! HOOH! WAHONGA POH TOOAHA!!!'

'What does this nightmare person want?' Asterix asked Getafix.

'No idea, but he must be the tribe's magician or medicine man! He doesn't seem to like us much, anyway!'





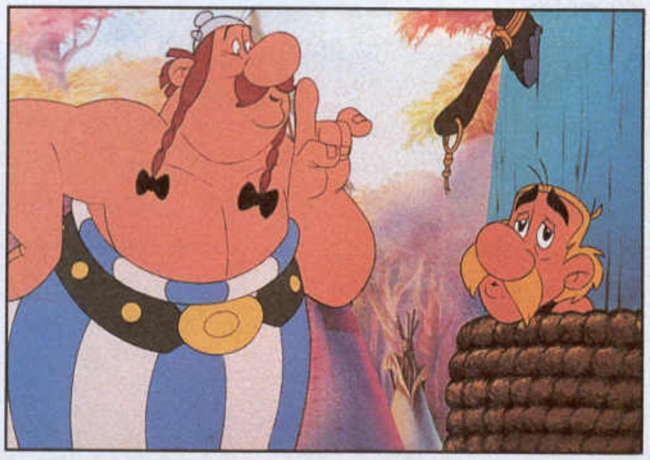
The medicine man, for such indeed he was, made a signal to an impressively large warrior. The warrior placed himself ten paces away from the Gauls, raised his enormous tomahawk, and suddenly flung it full force at Asterix. The little Gaul thought his last hour had come. He closed his eyes, thinking: 'This is a pity! I was going to have so many more adventures!' But what a surprise! The weapon never hit him. It had been stopped in its tracks by the powerful hand of Obelix, who had just arrived, guided to the scene by the Indian girl.

'PHEW! Obelix, at last! I've never been so pleased to see you!'

'See those funny Romans wearing feathers, Asterix? These Romans are... '

The druid interrupted him.

'I don't think they're Romans at all, my dear Obelix! We're a long, long way from Rome, and far away from Gaul!'



The medicine man started jabbering at Obelix in an alarming way. He made another sign to the huge warrior, who moved towards the Gaul, looking fierce and brandishing another tomahawk. Our fat friend simply punched him on the chin and sent him flying through the air. TCHAC!



After a brief moment of astonishment, all the warriors prepared to attack their strange visitor. But at that moment a small Indian wearing a great many feathers came out of a wigwam which was larger and more elaborately decorated than the others, holding the Indian girl's hand. She was obviously his daughter, and he was the chief. Waving his hand in a manner that made everyone back off, he went over to Obelix. He pointed to the girl, put his hand on his heart and said: 'HOW!' Which meant something like, 'You have saved my daughter's life! Peace be with you, and you are all welcome here!'

The Indians broke into shouts of joy, looking at Obelix as if he were their god Nanabozo in person. Asterix and Getafix were finally untied. Over to one side of the camp, the furious medicine man had to swallow his anger, but he swore revenge.

By now the Gauls and the Indians were all sitting in a circle round a fire. The Indians gave our heroes various things to eat. Obelix rather liked a stew offered by his neighbour on the left, the chief's daughter.

'Hmm, that tastes good! What is it? Gobble gobble?'

The chief, who was on his right, shook his head and said, 'Woof! Woof!'

Obelix went green in the face, and pushed the bowl away in disgust.

As for Getafix, he was doing some cooking of his own. He had borrowed a big clay pot for the purpose and filled it with water. It was now simmering over the fire.

'Luckily the Romans didn't steal the bag containing my ingredients and the herbs I picked in the forest, Asterix. With the fresh fish they have here, I'll be able to make some magic potion to refill your gourd. Because we have to think of getting back to Gaul. I have a nasty feeling that our village is in danger!'

The druid's nasty feeling was only too well justified, for the Gaulish village was under constant threat from the Romans. For the umpteenth time, Centurion Minibus was returning from yet another failed attempt to take it by storm. He reported back to Caesar. He was even more ragged and bruised than before.

'Ave, Thaethar! Thith time I think they weren't tho thtrong!'

'Your appearance would seem to suggest the opposite, Centurion! Let's wait a bit longer! They must run out of that potion in the end!'

Caesar was right. Morale in the village had reached an all-time low. Vitalstatistix showed his warriors the few drops of magic potion still left in the cauldron.

'Cacofonix still hasn't sighted Asterix and Obelix coming back, and this is the very last of the magic potion! When it's finished, we'll be finished too. Caesar will finally be able to say that he has conquered ALL Gaul!'





Meanwhile, and although they were longing to get home to their friends, our heroes had to attend a reception given for them by the Indian chief. The medicine man, who wanted to show off his powers so as to look good to these unknown visitors, threw a pinch of powder sparkling like a multitude of stars towards a large branch. At once a sudden shower of rain fell from the tree on the head of the Indian girl below. She did not seem to think much of this magic trick. Getafix, smiling, beckoned her over and handed her a bowl of the potion he had just finished making. The girl drank it. The magic potion took effect at once, lighting her up with a shining aura. She made straight for the medicine man and punched him hard. The medicine man was flung against the tree from which the rain was falling, and under the force of the collision an Indian fell from the branch where he was sitting and came down hard on top of the medicine man. He was still holding a jar with holes in it to simulate rain.





The girl's blow had drawn an 'AAAAAAH!' of admiration from all present, but they gave the medicine man a loud 'OOOOOOH!' of disapproval.

Ashamed and furious, he stalked away.

Night had fallen over the Indian camp. All the people had gone into their wigwams, and the place was deserted. However, a sinister shadow was cast on the walls of the tents. It was the figure of the medicine man, making for the clay pot in which Getafix had brewed his magic potion. The cunning trickster was very interested to know what it contained. With that potion, he could regain the respect of the Indians. He might even become chief of the tribe, or indeed head of all the Indian tribes.

But what a disappointment! The pot was empty. Now he'd have to find some way of getting the secret of his wonderful potion out of the old bearded stranger.



Never suspecting the medicine man's evil designs, the three Gauls were sharing a wigwam and making plans for the next day.



'We must find a way to leave this place at sunrise and get back to our village, Asterix!'

'We'll need a good boat for that. The one we came in is done for!'

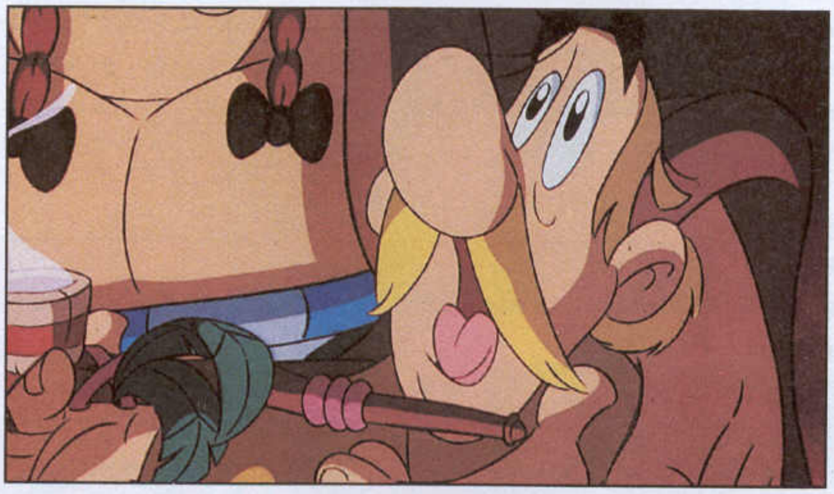
'Don't worry, I'll carry you on my back if necessary,' said Obelix.

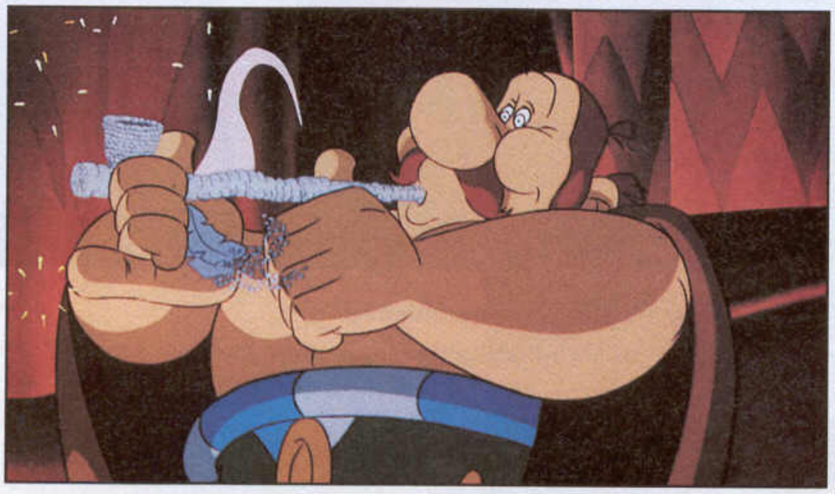
At that moment the flap over the entrance to the tent was pushed aside and the medicine man came in, a nasty smile on his nightmarish face.











'What's he after, him and his ugly mug? I don't trust his smile!'

'Want me to throw him out, Asterix?'

'No, wait, Obelix! Maybe he's come to apologize and make friends!' said Getafix.

The medicine man laid a hand on his heart, and tried to tell them he was friendly by means of mimicry and gestures. He took out a pipe of the traditional Indian design from under his bearskin and put it in the druid's hands. Then he mimed to Getafix to inhale through the mouthpiece.

'As far as I can make out, this is some sort of ritual object, and you're supposed to breathe in its smoke as a sign of peace!'

Getafix inhaled, and made a face.

'Yuk! It may be the custom to seal friendship this way, but by Belenos, it tastes horrible!'

The medicine man took the pipe back and put it in Asterix's hands.

'COUGH! COUGH! AARRRRGH! It's disgusting! How on earth could anyone enjoy that?'

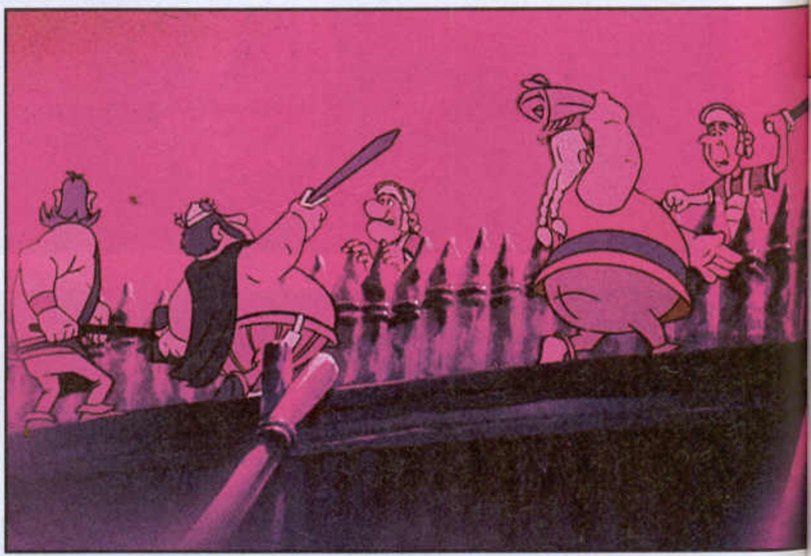
Now only Obelix was left. He took the pipe from Obelix himself, and inhaled so vigorously that the whole pipe burned like a match and fell to ashes.



The first to feel peculiar was Asterix, who suddenly fell into a deep sleep. Getafix tried to fight against the effects of the drug he had just inhaled, but in vain. He toppled over too. As for Obelix, his eyes were popping out of his head and going round and round, while green smoke came out of his ears. He fell heavily backwards. Pleased, the medicine man rubbed his hands with satisfaction, while Dogmatix, who was still wide awake, growled and bit the treacherous Indian's moccasin.

The medicine man put a large jar over Dogmatix's head. All that emerged from it was muffled growls and yelps.

The medicine man dragged the unconscious druid out of the wigwam and took him off to his secret hideout: a cavern in a rocky hillside.



As the full moon shone down on the landscape of the New World, it was bright daylight in Gaul, because of the different time zones, the existence of which, as Caesar might have been interested to know, of course supports the idea that the earth is round.

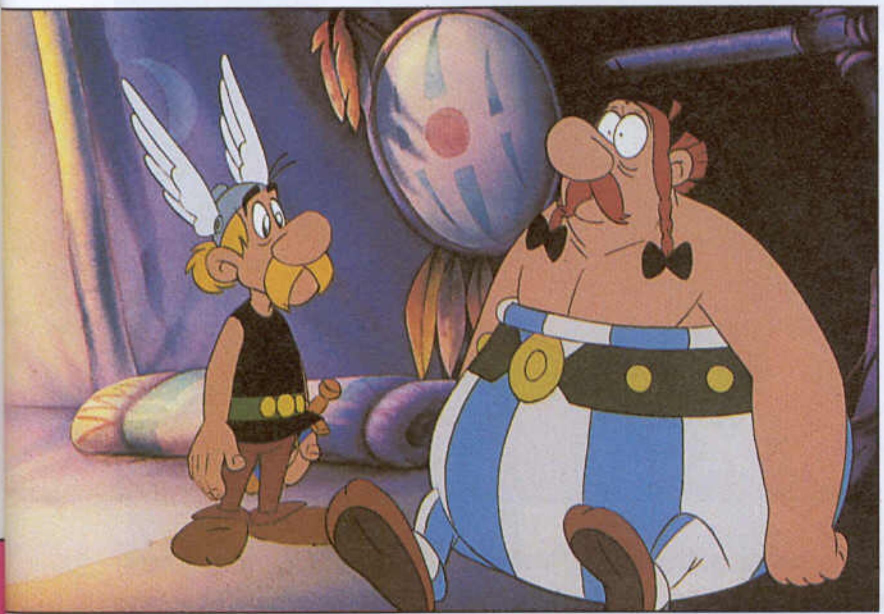
This time Caesar had decided to deal with the Gaulish village once and for all. Before giving the order to storm it with all his legions, he had stones and fiery missiles catapulted in among the village huts. All the Gauls, men, women and children, made a chain, using receptacles of every kind to put out the fires which were now burning everywhere

Despite their courage, they all felt this was the end. They were finished.

What would be the fate of the most indomitable of all indomitable Gauls after the final assault?



Day had broken over the Indian camp, and inside the wigwam Asterix finally woke up. He wasn't feeling too good. His head was heavy, and everything was going round and round in an odd sort of way. He saw that Obelix was still lying flat on the ground, but Getafix was not in the tent any more. Feeling worried, and hearing the muffled barking of Dogmatix, Asterix freed him from the jar. They both tried to rouse poor Obelix, who finally sat up, still in a totally comatose state. When Asterix came into his field of vision, he thought he saw a hideous monster addressing him in a cavernous voice. Terrified, he ran out of the wigwam, yelling with fright. Obviously he was still suffering from the effects of the drug.



After a moment's hesitation, Asterix and Dogmatix tried to catch up with him. There was a wild chase all through the Indian camp, with Obelix plunging through the wigwams and upsetting everything in his path.

Meanwhile, in the medicine man's cave, Getafix had woken up too, to find himself with his arms outstretched, fettered to the rocky wall by his wrists. The medicine man had put a large pot on a fire in front of him, and pointed to the druid's bag, containing the ingredients needed for the recipe of the magic potion. Getafix quickly realized that the Indian was asking him for the secret of the recipe.



'You villain! You will never get the secret of the potion, as sure as my name is Getafix!'



The medicine man looked threatening, and pointed to a stout door made of logs at the back of the cave. A huge grizzly bear was growling and snuffling behind it.

It didn't look as if the medicine man was joking, thought Getafix, and he went along with the demands being so rudely made. But there was a little smile on the druid's face, which suggested his real intentions.



Every time the medicine man showed him a herb or a powder, Getafix signalled yes or no, and whenever he nodded for yes, the medicine man threw the ingredient concerned into the simmering contents of the pot.

A little later, when he thought the potion was ready, the triumphant medicine man seized a bowl to scoop up some of the wonderful elixir and drink it. Sure that it would have given him power, he tested his strength by punching the rock hard with his fist.

Nothing moved, and the yell of pain that followed indicated that this was not the magic potion at all. Mad with pain and fury, the sinister Indian was about to put his threat into practice. He made for the door behind which the grizzly bear was imprisoned.



Unable to get his friend back to normal, Asterix decided to go and look for the druid.

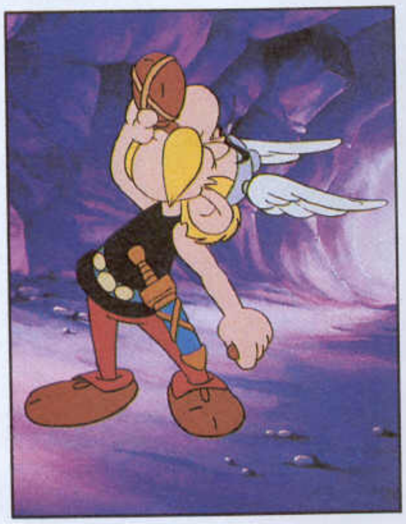
'I'm going to need your keen nose, Dogmatix! I want you to pick up Getafix's tracks before it's too late!'

Asterix was right to worry, because the bear had been let out and was moving towards the druid, growling. Getafix thought it was about time Asterix and Obelix came to get him out of this hole.

'ASTERIX! OBELIX! HELP!'

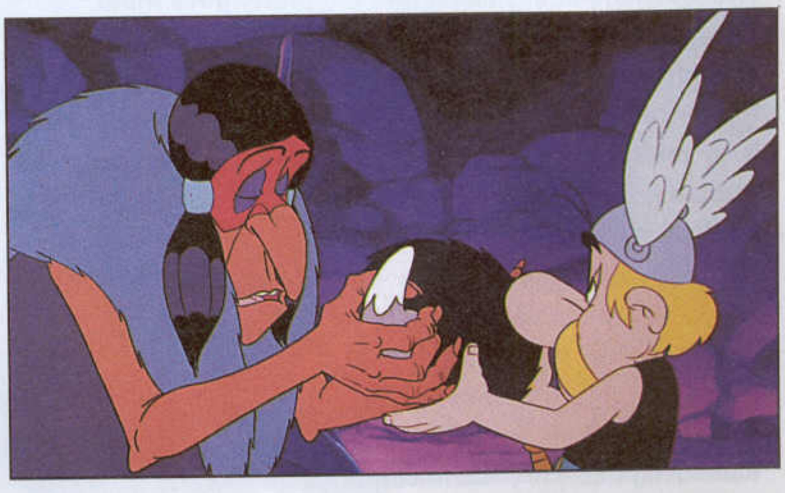




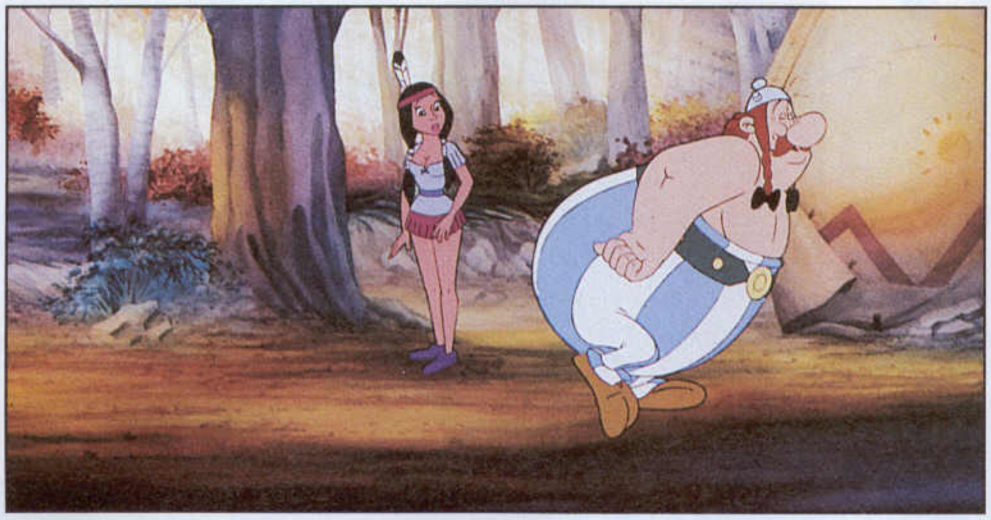


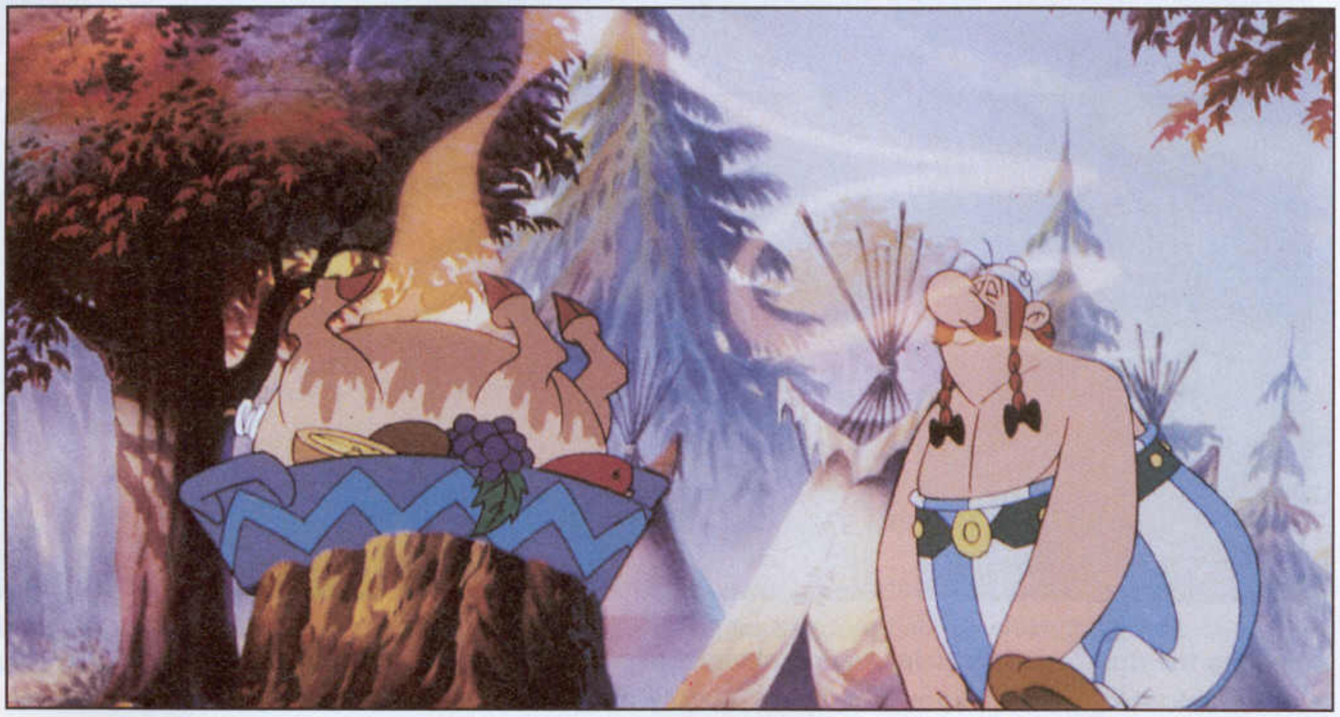


Hearing the druid's call for help, Asterix plunged into the cave to which Dogmatix had led him. The little Gaul took in the situation in a flash. Luckily his gourd had been refilled with magic potion... genuine magic potion. He quickly took a slug of it, and faced the monster, who had turned towards him. Just escaping a blow of the animal's dangerous paw, Asterix thumped him, sending the bear's huge furry body up to the ceiling of the cave and then crashing down to the ground. Terrified by such strength, and even more frightened of what might now happen to him, the medicine man handed Asterix his head-dress of bison horns as a sign of repentance and surrender.



Standing at the entrance to the cave, you could have heard a mighty PAF! and seen the medicine man flying low over the prairie. That was Asterix's response.

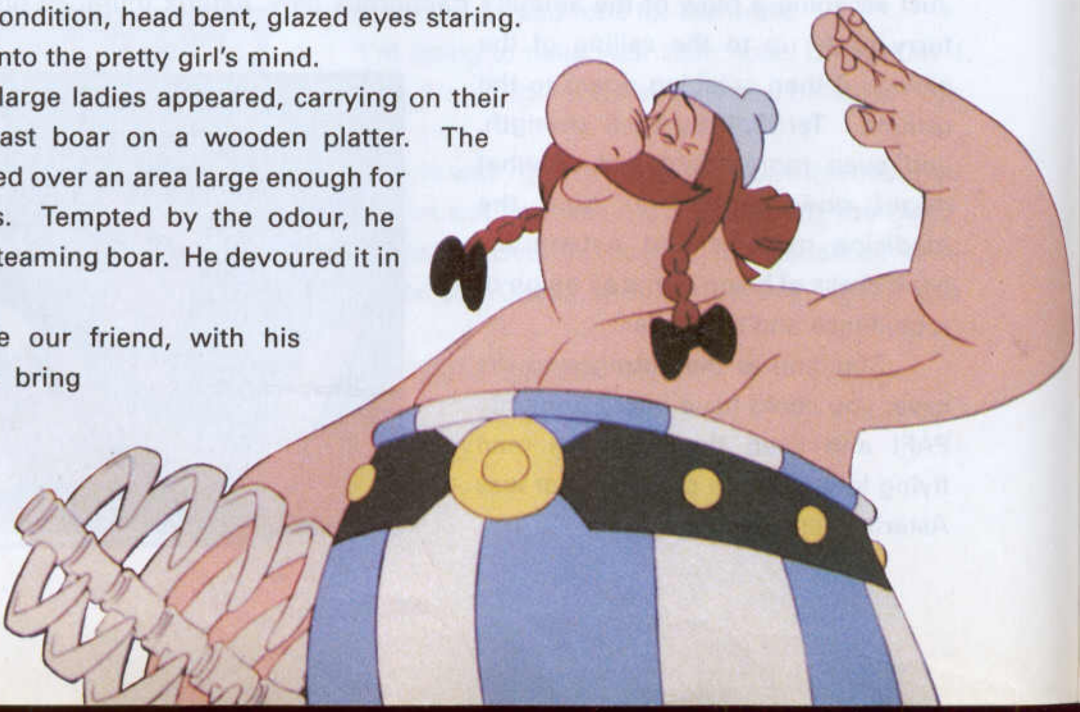


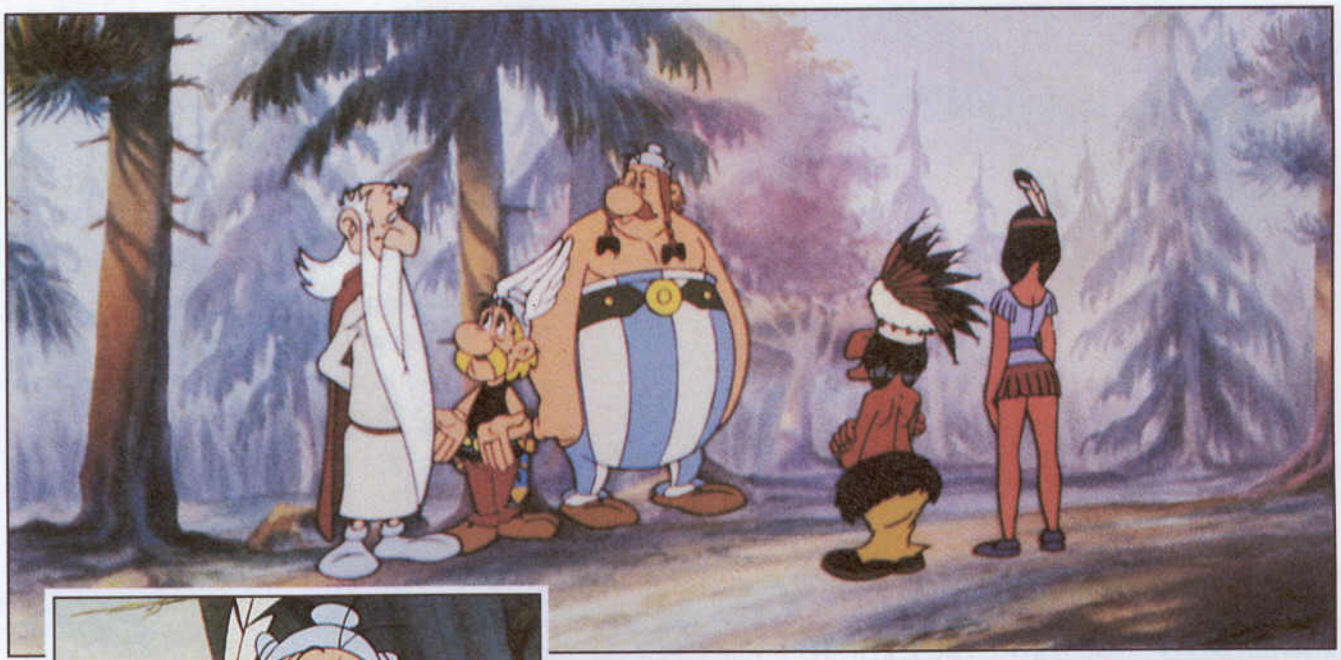


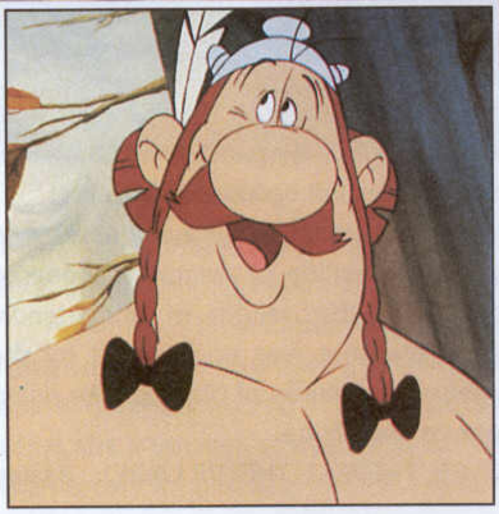
In the Indian camp, the chief's daughter Minihooha saw Obelix passing her in an unusual condition, head bent, glazed eyes staring. An idea immediately came into the pretty girl's mind.

Soon afterwards, four large ladies appeared, carrying on their shoulders an enormous roast boar on a wooden platter. The fragrance rising from it wafted over an area large enough for it to reach Obelix's nostrils. Tempted by the odour, he reacted fast and fell on the steaming boar. He devoured it in no time at all.

That was the antidote our friend, with his hearty appetite, needed to bring him back to his senses. Asterix and Getafix, watching his recovery, were delighted.





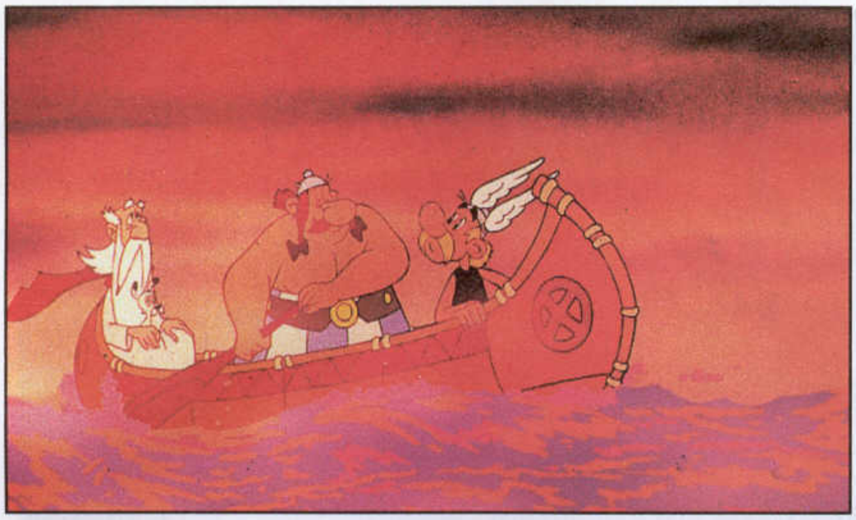


Then our heroes set out. The grateful Indian chief gave them a big canoe, well stocked with provisions to keep them going during a long sea voyage, as well as fishing lines for catching more.

The whole Indian tribe went down to the shore to wave the Gauls goodbye. As a memento, Minihooha took a feather out of her hair and put it behind Obelix's ear. He blushed with embarrassment. And as the canoe moved away towards the horizon, a tear rolled down the pretty girl's cheek. Not far away, you could have seen a totem pole carved to look like the heroic Gauls. And not far from that, a sadder and a wiser medicine man could have been seen humbly collecting dead leaves and rubbish with his spear and putting them in a bag. A scene of triumph and downfall!







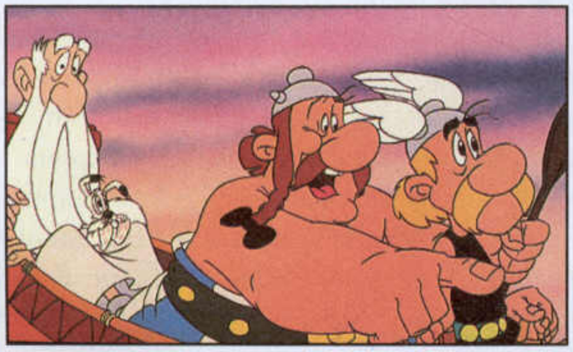
The ocean crossing was uneventful, even a bit monotonous. Day slowly followed day, and Obelix kept on paddling. Every time he dug his paddle hard into the water, the seasick druid gave a little groan, wishing he were home in the forest of the Carnutes...

The sight of a little island lost in the middle of the ocean seemed to promise a nice change. Sure enough, there was a palm tree on the island, and at the foot of that palm tree the pirates were patiently waiting to hitch a lift on a passing ship. Up at the top of the palm tree, which he was using as a crow's nest, the lookout man caught sight of our heroes.

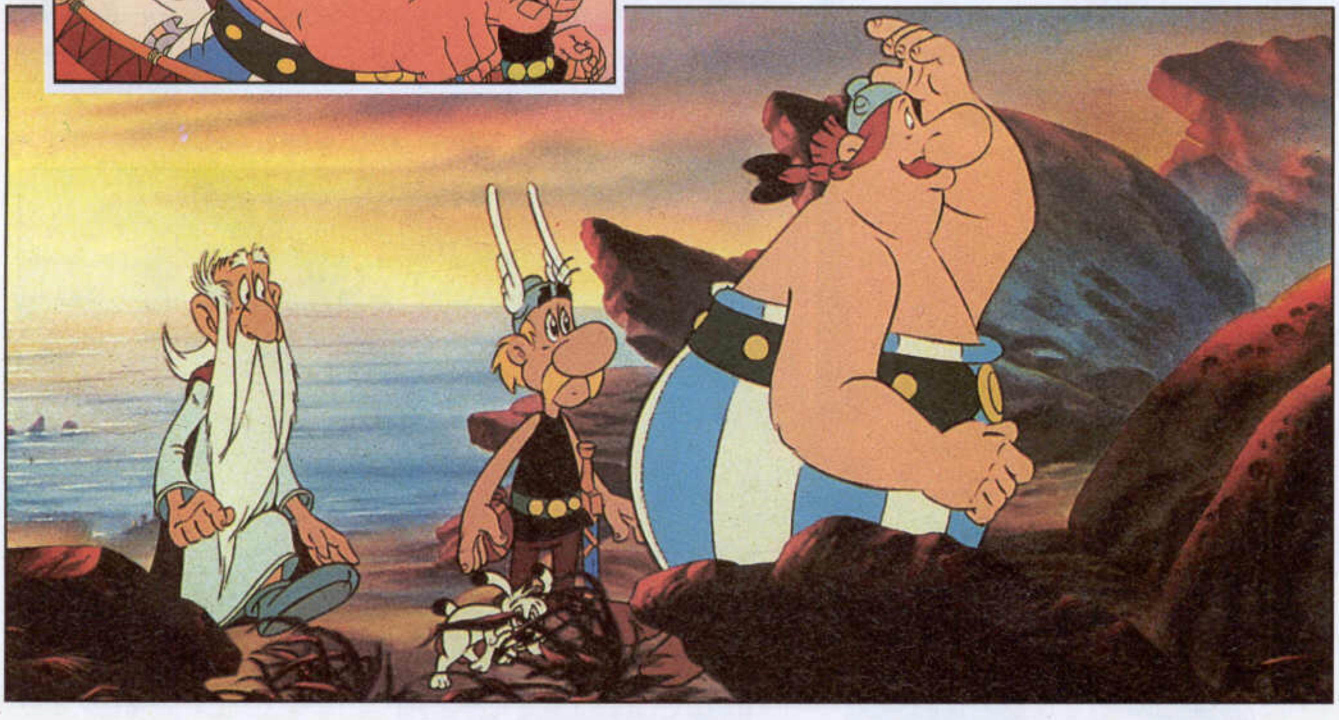
'THE GAU... THE GAU... THE GAUGAU... THE GAULS!!!'

Understandably terrified, the pirates all climbed the palm tree, which began to buckle under their weight. The Gauls took no notice at all when the canoe passed the island. As they paddled by, there was a CRAAAAAASH! The palm tree, uprooted, fell into the sea, taking its unusual occupants with it.

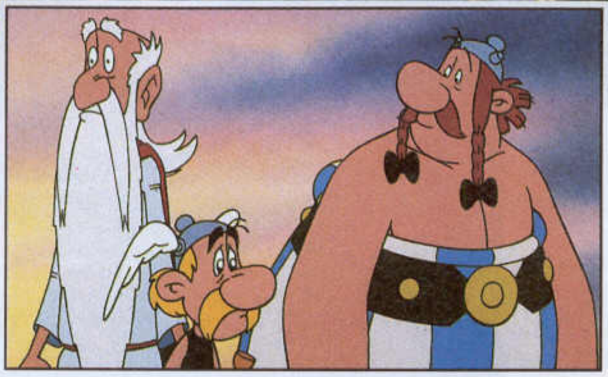
At last seagulls began to fly with the canoe, a hopeful sign. Land couldn't be far away now. And sure enough, the coastline of Armorica appeared on the horizon, to the delight of our friends. However, their pleasure was soon spoilt by the sight of an enormous plume of black smoke rising to the sky above the village.



'LOOK OVER THERE! THE VILLAGE! Faster, Obelix!!!'





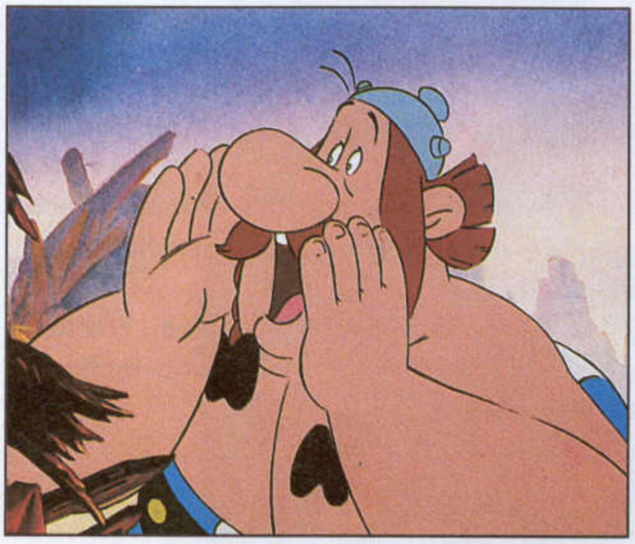


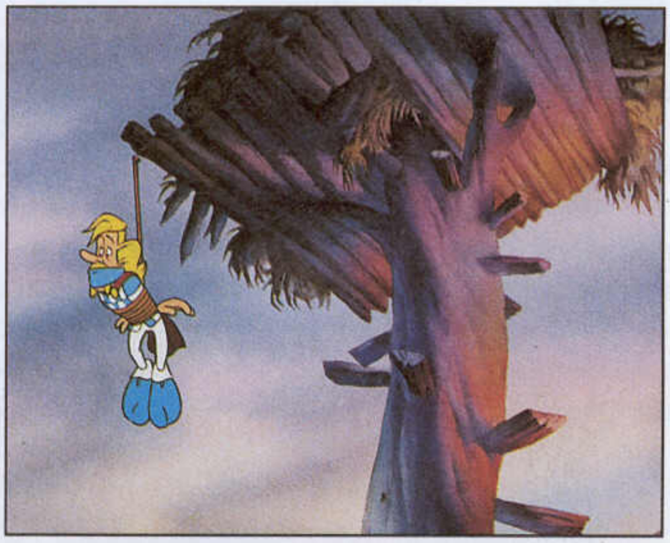
Obelix flailed away, paddling furiously, and the canoe arrived on the beach at top speed.

A scene of devastation awaited the heroes of this story, which they would have preferred to have a different ending. Burnt roofs, charred beams, the aftermath of a battle which must have been fiercely fought, and not a living soul left in the ruins of the village. The Gauls were horrified.

'Where are they all???'

'Hmmmph! Hmmmmph!' The bard, bound and gagged, was trying to attract their attention from the tree where he was dangling. Even the Romans had forgotten him. Once he was free, the bard explained.





'I was going to give our bold warriors a war-song to encourage them, but those uncultivated barbarians gagged me instead! It's a crying shame!'

'Listen, Cacofonix, what's happened to the villagers?' asked the druid.

'Caesar has taken them to the fortified camp of Compendium! They're going to stand trial there, and then be sent to prison in Rome!'

'Quick, Asterix! I'll make a cauldron of magic potion as fast as I can, while you two get ready to go and rescue our friends!'

Asterix decided that he and Obelix had better dress up as Roman legionaries to get near the enemy camp more easily. There was no problem finding suitable uniforms, what with all the stuff lying about on the ground in the village.



Soon afterwards, in their disguise, with Obelix carrying a whole load of gourds full of magic potion on his back, the two Gallo-Romans reached the gateway of the Roman camp. It so happened that two legionaries we know very well were on sentry duty at the gate. Stupidus and Corpulentus certainly got landed with all the dirty work.

'I can't wait for my metuta!* Only another five years, and then I'm going home to grow broccoli in Latium!** How about you, Stupidus?'

'Personally I fancy market gardening on Kos,*** 'cos they say the soil there is good for planting lettuces!'

After Asterix and Obelix had gone in, the two Roman sentries were planted quite deep in the soil themselves... only their battered heads emerging above ground level, as they saw stars, heard little birds singing, and bells ringing as they went round and round and round.

Once inside the camp, Asterix saw a large cage. All the villagers were crammed into it. The two Gauls strolled casually over. Nobody noticed them. They had concealed their moustaches with mufflers, and Obelix had bundled his plaits up under his helmet.

* Demob (Latin) ** The province around Rome *** A Greek island



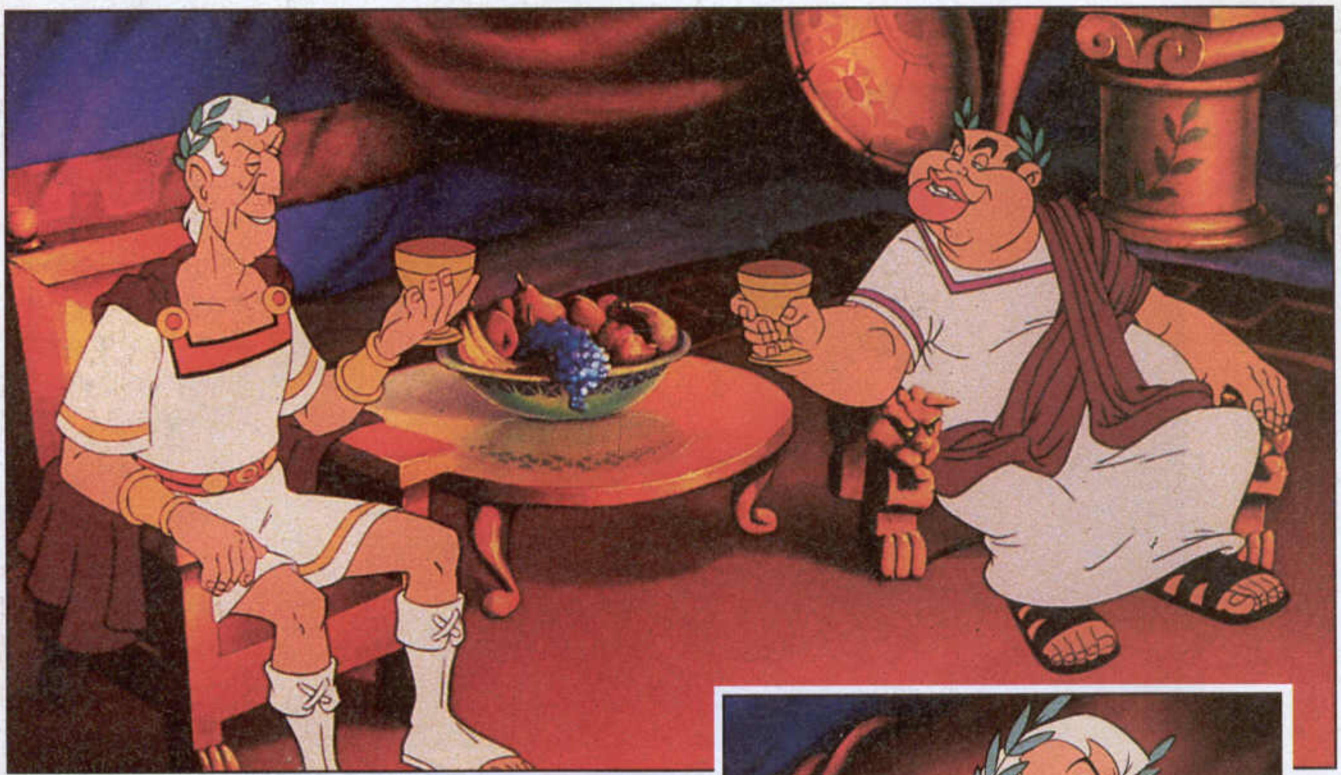
Judging by the rude remarks directed at them when they came close to the cage, even their fellow villagers hadn't recognized them. Not until Asterix was standing right in front of him did Chief Vitalstatistix realize who he was.

'But... WHY, IF IT ISN'T... !'

'Sssh! Take these gourds of potion!' whispered Asterix.

Obelix leaned back against the bars of the cage so that the gourds behind his back were within his friends' reach. Very soon everyone had some. Things would soon be hotting up in the fortified camp of Compendium!







In his tent, Julius Caesar was raising his goblet to Lucullus, seated opposite him. Caesar's panther was there too, lying at his master's feet.

'You have succeeded where all before you failed! I congratulate you, Lucullus! What would you like as a reward? Speak!'

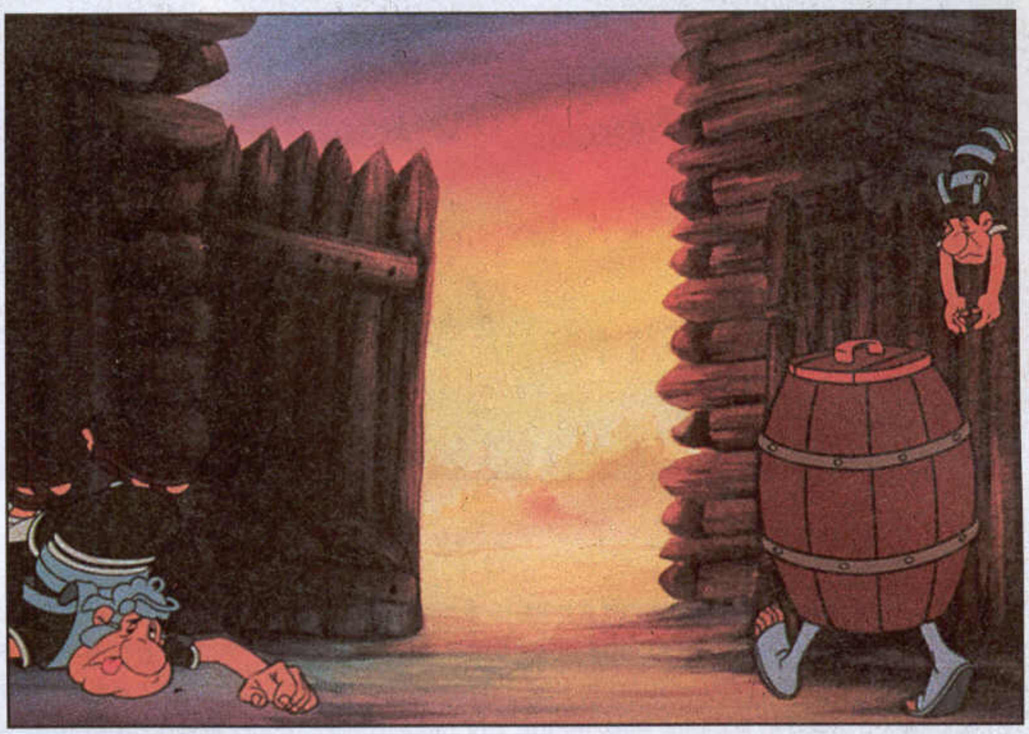
'O glorious Caesar, your generosity is equalled only by your goodness. So I wouldn't say no to a... '

CRAAAASH! The cage containing the Gauls had literally exploded under the pressure put on it by the prisoners inside.

Caesar grasped the situation as soon as a legionary, propelled by a strong arm, flew right through his tent.

Widespread panic broke out among the legionaries in the camp, who had not had time to realize where the bashing they were getting came from, and more particularly just why two of their own army comrades kept thumping them so hard. Soon it was the turn of the Roman camp to be totally wrecked.





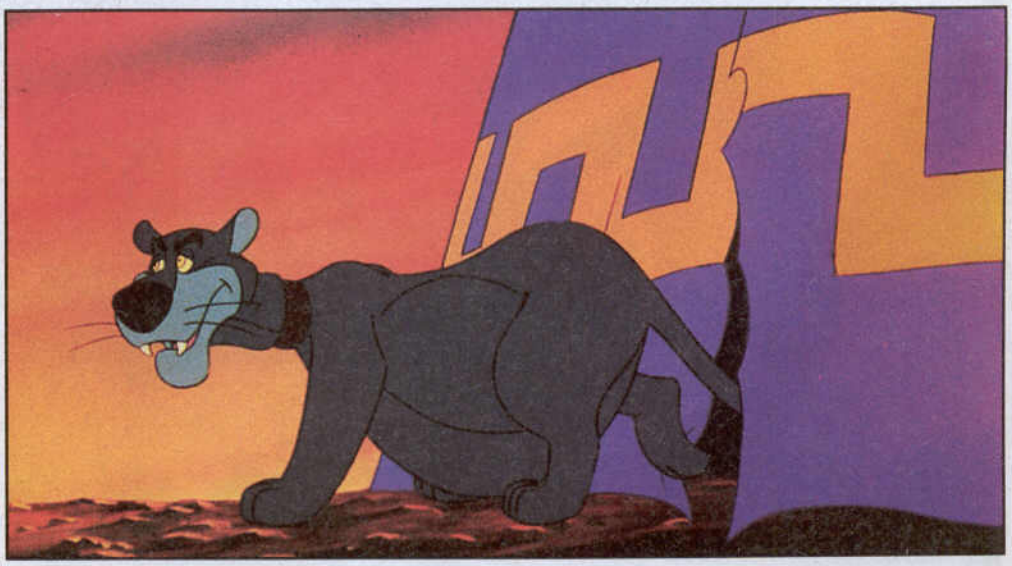
In view of these incidents, as unforeseeable as they were ill-timed, Caesar, who might be a man of war but was a prudent character too, thought it best to hide... in a barrel. Only his feet showed. Picking his way through the groups of legionaries who had been laid low, stopping when necessary so as not to attract attention, he passed through the gate in the fence.

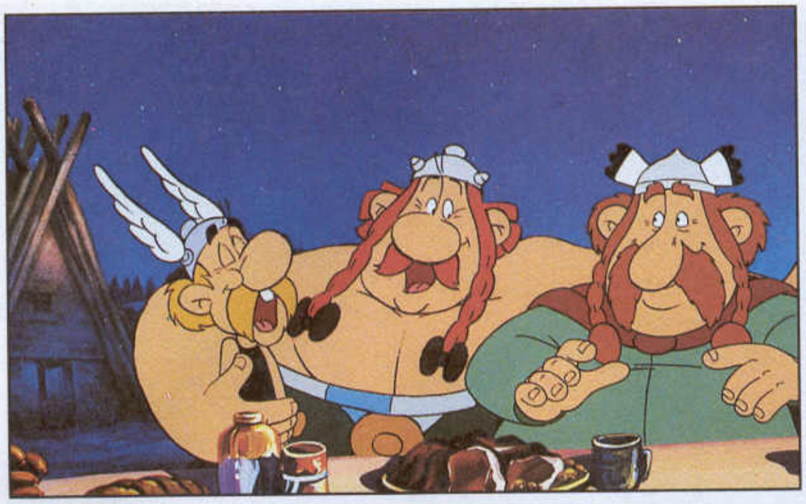
With the utmost dignity, the mighty Caesar set off through the countryside alone, sheltered by a receptacle which had once held the divine juice of the vine.

But what had become of Lucullus and of Caesar's panther? Well, the mascot might have been seen strolling placidly out of his master's badly damaged tent, paying no attention to the battle raging all around and licking his chops with a well-fed expression. His enormous belly hung down to the ground.

And the stifled voice of Lucullus could have been heard inside it.

'Hey! LET ME OUT, WILL YOU, YOU GREAT BIG BRUTE!!!'



Back in their village, even though it was in a sad state, all the Gauls were happy.

They could rebuild the village later, but tonight the important thing was to hold a banquet.

As usual, the big circular table had been set up round a huge fire where the boars Obelix loved so much were roasting. Obelix was telling his neighbour stories about gobblers, stories which the other Gaul had some difficulty in understanding.

Asterix asked Getafix, who seemed lost in thought:

'Any idea where the New World we visited actually is, O druid Getafix ?'

'No, Asterix. But in my opinion that New World will have to wait several centuries before it's really discovered. And it may well be best that way for men with red skins, like the people who welcomed us to their wigwams.'

And finally, the moon smiled down on the happy spectacle of the hot-tempered and indomitable Gauls, still holding out against the invaders.

THE END



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